Special credits to Kotozu for helping to edit this chapter.

01. The New Monster of the Family

The start of a new volume.

Please take good care of me.

Chapter 1.

I suddenly woke up. It was still dark, about dawn.
In my hazy consciousness, I let out a shiver.

I felt an unusual chill.

"...Lily?"

The Lily that I usually hug in my sleep is not beside me.

No. That's wrong.
Lily is here.
Cushioning my sleeping body, she has been supporting me as a ‘bed’.

It was just that she was not in her human form.

“Where are you…?”

I was still in a daze.
Lily had pointed it out before, but this sleep-related condition of mine can be said to be one of my weak spots.
My head was completely not working, even my thought processes were working at less than one-tenth of its capacity.

The things that happened before I went to sleep, as well as the coherency of what had occurred until now, mean nothing to me right now.

For now, it was taking all my strength just to think about the fact that ‘Lily isn’t here’, so I mustered my energy and called out.
And she responded.

There was a sensation of a jelly-like thing moving at my back.

From both my left and right sides, tentacles smoothly slid up and wrapped around my body.
If an unknowing person saw me now, he would have completely misread the situation as ‘a pitiful victim who is on the verge of being preyed upon by an unknown animal’.

Of course, I did not panic.

That is because, the Slime that I am sprawled on, is a monster that is a part of my ‘Family of Monsters’.
And I, despite being unqualified, lead them as the Master of Monsters.

The transparent tentacles that were wound around me took on the rough shape of an arm, rippled once, and slowly turned into the arms of a girl.
From the fingertips to the wrist. Then, the lower arm, elbow, upper arm, and the shoulder, the smooth color of soft skin spread out.

While gazing at the scene, I felt my vision flicker.
Perhaps I was still in a sleepy daze. The resulting radiance of the transformation was very beautiful, and I became entranced by the transformation of a Slime turning into a girl.

Two soft and bouncy somethings could be felt through my jersey, pressed against my back.

Dokun, *dokun*—the audible rhythm of life could be heard.
I felt the sweet breath of a girl close to my ear.

All of those were products of mimicry.
Yet to me, all of them have the same meaning as the real thing, a proof of life.

“Good morning, Master.”

What turned around to meet me eye to eye, was a girl that had her back half—from ear to lower body—still bonded in the state of a Slime.

“Aah. Lily, I…”

Just as I was about to say something, my lips were suddenly sealed.

“**…**Mm?”

My body was turned to the front, and I was given a kiss so passionate that it felt like it was engulfing me.
If I were to put it in other words, it could be said that she was ‘devouring’ me with greed.
Wiggling her tongue like a mollusk, she entangled it around mine as I was still half-asleep.

——Lily seems to like kissing.

That was something I understood from the night I bonded with her.
<TLN: Read: that hot and passionate night of activities - Blesserz>

I wonder if she has a fondness for it.
I pester her whenever possible.
Also, once she starts, she doesn’t seem to stop.

That’s fine. As a man, there’s no reason for me to complain.

However, sometimes I become anxious… All that saliva that I’ve swallowed, was it perhaps from bodily fluids from Lily’s slime form?

Well, saliva is a bodily fluid, but a Slime’s bodily fluids are kinda… *different* in viscosity.

I like kisses, like them like them—love them very much! ...to an extent where it can be thought of as ‘endearing’, but if it was a type of inclination like ‘knowing the pleasure of becoming a part of your beloved’, even if I admit to being her Master, I have no confidence in responding to that.

“——Pwhaah.”

While I have been profoundly thinking of stuff like that, Lily seems to be satisfied.
After changing plenty of kisses, she released me.

By that time, I have woken up completely. …I felt like holding my head. ‘What are you trying to do early in the morning?’ Because I was half-awake, I lost the self-control to ask that.
However, that time has passed and won’t come back.

Lily had a strange glint in her eyes for some reason, this presence feels dangerous.
I know from experience that she was classified as a ‘carnivorous woman’.

It was necessary to change gears.

“...Morning, Lily.”
“Mmm. Gochisousama.”
<TLN: Gochisousama - An informal saying for ‘thanks for the food’ after meals. -Blesser>
“Osomatsusamadeshita*. …No. That’s the reply for snacks.”
<TLN: Similar to gochisousama, except that this is for snacks only. -Blesser>
“Ahaha. Good morning, Master.”

Exchanging greetings again, I stood up from the bed that Lily has been serving as.
I lightly shake my head with the intention of shaking off the slightly pink atmosphere that she created. Because it was early in the morning, I put aside the arousing and other bad thoughts she invoked, and turned around to face her.

“By the way, how’s the condition of your body?”

Today was the second day after the death match against the White Arachne.
We had been holing up in the Arachne's nest until now, resting our wounded bodies.

Lily and Rose had both received dire injuries.
Lily had to recuperate her seriously injured body that couldn't be treated even with her third-ranked recovery magic. Rose, on the other hand, had to remake her broken parts for her to move about properly.

This was also the reason why Lily didn't use the form of a girl while I was sleeping.
Even now, when I look closely, her smile is slightly lacking in her usual cheer.

As expected, even though her upper half was naked and her chest was hidden, I don’t feel lustful from looking at the face of Lily, who was in such a bad condition for the sake of changing her figure from a Slime to a human girl.

“Aha. It’s still kinda painful.”
"Then, continue sleeping."

Nodding her head of flaxen hair, Lily narrowed her eyes, seemingly in pleasure.
<TLN: Flaxen: pale yellowish-gray color - Blesserz>

"Mmm. I'll do that..."

Slithering her upper half body sank back into that of a Slime's.
Petting the flat and spacious spot where her head had sunk back into a Slime, I turned and left.

There was a blank face watching our exchange.
...It seems like we were seen.

“Morning, Rose."
"Good morning to you, Master."

The hardworking Rose greeted me with a quiet voice as she one-handedly worked with a utility knife that looked like the usual.
The reason why she lowered her voice was because Kato-san was still wrapped up and sleeping under the sheets.

As I closed the distance, Rose stood and greeted me.

"You're up quite early today."
"I was woken up. Then got up after that."
"Was it Anesama? It can't be helped. Since she wasn't pampered yesterday."
"Putting it that way, it's as if spoiling her is something natural..."

It was true that for the entirety of yesterday, Lily was unconscious as she was focused on recovering her body, so even if I wanted to, I could not have pampered her.

"Yesterday night, Anesama was bullied by Kato-san, you see. Even if she knows that she's in the wrong logically, emotionally, she most likely wanted to be pampered by Master.”
"Because it was impossible yesterday, it became the first thing in the morning, huh. ...Come to think of it, I still haven't heard the details regarding what happened the day before yesterday when I was not around."

I thought that asking Rose what happened between Lily and Kato-san would be the most objective. This was the perfect time to ask, as Lily was unconscious and Kato-san was currently still in dreamland.

I spent about thirty minutes asking Rose about all the happenings during that short time when I was not around.

"It seems that we've troubled Kato-san quite a bit."

After hearing about the events, I unthinkingly let out a sigh.

Kato-san seems to have saved my hide this time round.
Even I, who was slow on the uptake, could vaguely guess at the amount of danger my Family was placed in. It was my fault that I did not prepare an effective plan for this incident. Even so, I still owe her one for taking care of my Family when I wasn’t around—that was something that must be repaid.

I was frustrated that the only thing that I could do was ensuring her protection with those I trust.

Furthermore, I inquired Rose on the progress on her own body's condition.

"Regarding the parts of my body, I completed retrofitting them yesterday."

Just like she said, Rose's body no longer had any painful-looking cracks.
Her body looked different from when I first met her; the wooden texture no longer looks exposed, it became paler, and looks closer to a mannequin doll now.

I thought about the sword that has been hanging by my waist all this while.
Even though it had also been crafted out of wood, Lily had likened the metallic texture to 'Damascus Steel'. Even Rose's body was made by and rebuilt with her own hands. It wouldn't be strange even if the wooden materials she used took on a number of unusual properties from her own magic.

"Because I also upgraded my arms, their strength has been increased somewhat. I believe that it will be of help to Master."
"I see. I'm looking forward to it."
"The problem are the weapons. The battle two days ago rendered several armors unusable. I would like to request about four days to fix all of them."
"Got it."

This wasn't a bad thing. Rose's hands have gotten better. By renewing the entire set of armors, it would lead to greatly increasing our battle strength.

However, if we do that, then Rose won't be able to travel for four days on end, huh.
Lily probably needs time to recuperate from her wounds as well.

That's not exactly an issue. They really have worked very hard and deserved some time to rest.
The problem, is with myself.

Yesterday, I was plagued with fatigue and phantom pains.
Even though they can be said to be non life-threatening, I did suffer some serious injuries. Thanks to the benefits of recovery magic, my wounds were healed, but the stamina that I lost couldn't be restored. That was the reason behind my lethargy, and I guess the phantom pains that I've been experiencing are due to the shock my frail, human body received.

However, when I woke up today, my body had mostly recovered to its normal state.

With this, I should be able to move about well enough. Even though I could, the reason why I'm not working could be attributed to laziness.

"I have a request to ask of Rose."
"All that Master wishes for is top priority. Please speak of any request you have."
"There's no need for that much humility… Ah well."

I let out a wry smile as Rose bent down on a knee and bowed her head.

"My request is just that I want my equipment to take priority."
"That is, of course, possible. Those were my original intentions as well."
"How long would they take to be finished?"
"The production can be completed by noontime today."
"Really? I can start exploring the forest at noon then."
"Do you already intend to commence the search in the forest?"
<TLN: Referring to searching for more monsters for more Family Monsters -Blesserz.>

I nodded in answer to the question which was asked with increasing surprise.

"Ah. It's because I can move about already."
"I do not mind, but Anesama can not move, as you can see. Shall I switch to working at the night instead? However, if I do so, the enhancements for the equipments will require more time."
"Nah. Rose should continue with what you've been doing. I now have another fighting force to rely on aside from Lily and Rose, right?"

Rose seems to have understood my implied meaning.

"Do you intend to search in the forest only accompanied by her?"
"Why, does Rose object to it?"
"Master is still in convalescence. I have humbly determined that Master should not be overexerting himself."
"Even without you worrying, I don't intend to do so. My body can really move about without problems already."

I tried twisting my body about—there don't seem to be any parts that are in pain.
There is no doubt that my body is in good health.

"Just… that certainly seems to be the case. It might be just as Rose said; it's not good to overstrain one's body while recovering."

Because of the White Arachne's assault, I've only made them worried. It can't be helped that they are feeling especially sensitive now.
I feel apologetic that they have to constantly worry about me. I should give way for now.

"I understand. Then, I'll maturely and properly rest my body for today and watch my body's condition. The departure will be postponed to tomorrow morning. Will that be okay?"
"…Yes."

Rose seemed to have more to say, but backed down for my sake for now.
If I didn't agree to quietly do nothing for the whole of today, she would definitely not have remained silent and nag at me.

Thinking of that, I silently watched Rose as she worked but… Before long, Kato-san woke up, finished breakfast, and I became bored when it passed noon.

I wasn't aware of it until now but, I seem to have an existing obsessive mentality of 'needing to do something'.
The time I took for resting as a precaution, became painful for me instead.

"..."

Especially after telling Rose that I will rest my body today, I cannot say that I am going out, nor can I practice my swings to train my body.

"Do you intend to go somewhere, Master?"

The moment I stood up, Rose questioned me with a sharp voice. Perhaps she was looking out for me on Lily's behalf as well.

"I'm just going out for some air."
"Is that so? Please go ahead then."

Perhaps realizing that I felt that I had too much time on my hands, Rose's thoughts of astoundment and resignation were transmitted to me through the path between us.

I hurriedly departed from that place.

* * *

Even though the Arachne's nest consisted of logs that were just stuck together with spider threads, it was in tatters after the battle two nights ago, and with just some slight reworking by Rose's hands, it became shockingly comfortable for living in.

It takes a lot of effort for humans to walk on it, but it’s now on a level where you won’t fall down from your shoes getting stuck.

I exited the Arachne's nest.
The moment I did so, a white figure came flying into my sight.

"Gerbera."
<TLN: Gerbera:A genus of plants in the daisy family, flower meanings: innocence and purity -Blesser>
「おう、主殿」
"Aye, Milord."

When I called out its name after leaving the Arachne's nest, the White Arachne——now called Gerbera, showed an embarrassed smile of a young girl.

'Gerbera' was given to her when she begged for a name the day after the mortal combat.

It was quite hard to come up with.
In the first place, I had already run out of stock of the name of flowers; in the end, Kato-san had to help come up with it.

——How does ‘Gerbera’ sound?
——It has also been called ‘Spider Bloom’ for the way it blooms.
——That's it. It's decided then.

Kato-san finally showed a meager but joyful expression, perhaps due to the curious act of coming up with a name for someone.
With that said, it still doesn't change the fact that I had hassled her again.
I was apologetic and thankful at the same time. If it wasn't for her, there might have been a serious possibility that the White Arachne's name might have become something like 'Tulip'.

Of course, there was no reason to obsess with picking out a floral name. In the first place, I didn't have the intention of choosing from the names of flowers when I picked 'Lily'.

However, even though it wasn't a necessity, there was sufficient reason to do so.
To be the only person without a floral name, that person who was named would hate it.

She dislikes being the only different one.

Notwithstanding that kind of encounter we had... ...No. It was because of that encounter that she values and holds her companions highly.

It’s a good inclination. While thinking favorably of her attitude, I asked a question.

"Oh yeah, Gerbera. That thing I told you about earlier, is it ready?"
"Aye."

In reply to my question, Gerbera returned with a nod.
I had requested something of her.

“It hath just been completed. How doth it fare?”

What Gerbera took out was a white cloth that had a smooth sheen.

To be exact, it was a piece of clothing made from white cloth.
It is of a simple make that can be closed at the front.

This is a product made with spider threads, created by the special ability of the Arachne.
Yesterday, I was only shown a little of it, but by just using a couple of wooden sticks, she showed that she was really good at weaving.
According to Mizushima Miho's memories from Lily, it seems to be something called a ‘backstrap loom’. Gerbera has some tools that were of her own arrangements, but it's essentially the same thing.

For example, the reason why she, a monster, could clad the upper young girl half of her body in thin cloth, is thanks to this ability.
Of course, what I had requested was a tighter and sturdier version of this product.

That was obvious. That could only be something meant for a baby doll. Now isn’t the place for enjoying such assortments. What I wanted was a more fitting sort of clothing.

I checked the clothes in my hands.
However, it seemed different from what I expected of spider threads. It wasn't sticky, and gave off a smooth, silk-like feeling when I touched it.

I heard some trivia in the past that spider threads had different properties from warp and woof. In regard to this cloth, it feels the same as the longitudinal and transverse ones; threads without adhesiveness.<checked>
<TLN: Google ‘warp and woof’ to understand -Blesserz>

“How dost it fair? 'Tis a wonder, is it not?”

Perhaps proud of it, Gerbera stretched out her body.

Such things make her similar to Rose. She too, when she had made something herself and shown it to me, had seemed proudly happy.

In Gerbera's case, she did not have a calm personality like Rose, and simply hugged, or rather, forcefully embraced me.
More than that, it seems like she doesn't know how to maintain distance between herself and others. It's too close. It was so close that, if she wanted to, she could easily steal my lips.

"I also didn't think that it would turn out this well."
“Indeed, is it not so?”
"Yes. Looks like it. ...I know that, so don't stick so close."

I pushed her shoulder and opened up some distance between us.
My heart skipped a beat when my palm came in direct contact with the delicate girl, but I don't show it on my face.

...But Gerbera would come to know of it either way, so it doesn't really make a difference.

“So hurry up and wear it. How do I say it, your appearance is embarrassing.”

It’s too late to say this now, but Gerbera's appearance is quite provocative.

It has been bothering me for some time now, but the outerwear made of thin cloth is practically see-through under the midday sun, barely hiding one’s skin from view.
Also, speaking of this girl, she isn’t even trying to cover her chest at all.
She looked so defenseless that a man without inhibitions might even forget that her lower half is that of a spider and attack her.

Well... In that case, he would have casually gotten the tables turned on him, and it would be all over though.
Even without attacking her, there is also the possibility of getting killed just upon meeting her.

I should be incredibly grateful to the heavens for letting such a powerful monster become my comrade.

“Hurry up, will you."

However, this and that are different.

Gerbera seemed like she still wanted to be praised more, but when I tell her off strongly, she unexpectedly did not resist; and obediently followed my instructions.

“Fine, fine. Doth not be angered, Milord. …Strange. Was I mistaken that Milord was not displeased with the idea? But Milord hast been gazing at mine figure for quite a while.”
"..."

It seemed that my self-control was still lacking.

If I'm allowed to make excuses for my actions; it wasn't on purpose.
It was done unconsciously.
Really.

No. In this situation, it’s still bad even if it's unintentional.

....Could it be that I'm sexually frustrated?

I had been sleeping on the same bed with Lily... ...More like, I had been using her as a bed, and since the first night, I haven't done it with her.
It has been hard just to survive, and not to mention that I felt that it would be bad to surrender my body to such acts in this kind of situation.

Above all, Rose was awake and Kato-san was sleeping nearby. I couldn’t be true to my desires in this open space where one can even freely run about.

…If that was what has caused sexual frustration …I must be a bit more vigilant from now on.
…In one corner of my head, it wasn’t as if I couldn’t hear the whisper of ‘It can’t be helped since I’m a guy’, but if I end up listening to the devil’s murmurings, I’ll end up just like a certain Kaga.
That's not good.

"I hath changed, Milord.”

Recovering from my useless thoughts, I returned to what was in front of me. The figure of Gerbera stood: she wore the thin cloth she has been wearing on top of the translucent clothes she just showed me.

"..."

The chest area seems a little too open, but I’m not one to speak about girls’ fashion. Before I came into this world, in modern Japan, I knew of girls the same age as me that wore even more extreme clothes during vacation.

And in actuality, they were very fitting.

With fantasy-like straight, long hair, unnaturally delicate facial features, and mysterious scarlet eyes, what's above Gerbera's waist is practically that of a fairy or an elf.
Because such a girl was wearing such fluttery clothes, it is impossible for it not to be fitting.

Now that her skin can no longer be seen directly, her devilish aura had thinned out, and honestly, she was very adorable.

"How is it, Milord? Is it fitting?"
"Ah. It's adorable."
"O-oh? A-adorable...?"

When I casually responded, Gerbera's blindingly white skin was dyed red immediately.
Since her skin is white, I can see the redness up to her chest as it stood out even more.
Even though she's such a beauty, she isn't accustomed to being praised. Her lips couldn't help but curl up in happiness. It must be because she had always been alone. If she was a normal girl, I would be worried about her getting cheated by bad guys.
As I was waiting for Gerbera to regain her composure, I started to opened my mouth.

"It really is quite something. So, please continue make clothing for us."

By the way, I am currently wearing jerseys for my top and bottom.
It's easy to move around in, and we're not in a situation where we have to worry about fashion. You can tell what I'm mindful about just by looking at my face. That's another reason why I'm not concerned about this, but Lily only has a jersey to wear,; we simply have no other stock of clothes.

I would rather like to be spared from only having a set of clothes on my body. Also from a hygienic and mental aspect as well.

"I can look forward to its durability as well right?"
"Umu. Since my spider threads were used. It will neither be torn nor be easily pierced."
"That sounds reassuring."
"I'll let you behold one that shan't tear even in a Fire Fang's maw."
"I'm looking forward to it."

In that case, the insides of my body probably wouldn't hold out against the power of the jaws, but I won't say something that'll dampen her spirits. Besides, we'll proceed further into the forest, so being better equipped is obviously a good thing.

"Ah. That's right."
"Aye? Milord?"
"I feel bad for asking for another favor now, since I just requested one of you…"

“Take it not to heart. If I am able, I’ll do anything for thee, Milord.“

Gerbera showed an expression of joy while saying that.
For us——perhaps the fact that she could do something for the sake of the first comrades she gained caused her overjoyous atmosphere.

It is really a good indication.
She's hyped up about it. If she’s like this, then it’ll lessen the time needed for us to be familiar with each other.

"Would you like to enter the forest with me tomorrow?"
“Together, Milord? Certainly, if Milord desires, Milord need not go in person, but only command thine servant to retrieve it. Even if ‘tis to gather the carcasses of four Fire Fangs, an easy feat it shall be.”
"I don't need such bad tasting meat. ...It's not something like that; I need to be there in person. My [Monster Tame] ability requires me to be near monsters..."

As I filled Gerbera, who recently joined as a comrade, in on her lack of knowledge, I finally felt something akin to a challenge for the first time since stepping into this world.

Everyone worked together to overcome a huge difficulty and a new fighting force was added.
Surely, from now on, everything will go well. That’s what I believed.
<TLN: ...And he just cursed them all -Blesserz>

AUTHOR’S NOTES

◆The second volume has started!

◆With the completion of the first volume, thank you very much for the many reviews!
I look forward to your support from now on as well.

◆The next update will be on 2/5 (Wednesday).

02. Suspicion and Trust

Synopsis of previous chapter:

~If Kato-san hadn't been there in volume 2 chapter 1~
(Omitted part)

If she's the only person that did not have a flower's name, the person named would hate it. She doesn't want to be left out by her comrades.

Even after meeting like that… No. Because they met like that, she now thought of her comrades preciously.
It's a good sign. While thinking that I like her attitude I opened my mouth.

"That's right, Tulip. It's about the talk before, has the preparation finished?"
"..."
"What's wrong, you look odd. Do you feel unwell, Tulip?"
"U-… uwaaaaaaaaann!"
"Wh-Where are you going? Oi. Tulip—!?"

**Reference to the previous chapter. The fairly joking result.*

Chapter 2.

Dawn, a few days later.

"I am sorry to have hastened you."
"No worries..."

I received new equipment from Rose.

The usual chestplate, lower body protector, and a big shield.
Just, the shades are a bit darker, different than the ones before.

It's not at the level of the pseudo-damascus steel sword that Rose had produced but this seems to be stronger than the previous one as well, if everyone can be equipped with this our

battle power can be increased by several times.

Rose had done a good job as usual.

I quickly finished the preparations to get ready.

“Alright. Preparations are finished. It’s about time to go.”

After I talked to Rose and Kato-san, I stroked the surface of the transparent jelly-like monster using my fingertip.

“Also, Lily. I’m heading out for a bit.”

There was no answer.

“...”

Lily shut down her consciousness in order to recover. It's akin to state of sleeping for humans; while doing that, she can't maintain her mimicry ability during then. She 'woke up' a few times, She woke up a few times like she did yesterday morning, but looking at her weakened state was a bit painful.

Being a Slime with vitality, there was no danger to her life, she only needs a few days to recover, but during that time, it's better to leave her as she is.

"Then, I'll leave things to you."
"Yes, Master."
"...Okay."

After I exchanged greetings, I moved to exit from the Arachne's nest.

"Master."

Just before leaving the nest, Rose, whom I had just exchanged farewells with, called out to me.

I looked back towards Rose.
Maybe there was something that I had forgotten.

"Master, are you really going?"
"That topic again?"

Since yesterday, Rose had been opposed to me going out surveying the forest.

It had only been three days since the mortal combat against the White Arachne.
Because of that event, her worry was still reasonable.

It’s just, it seems her concern was a bit excessive.

"We have talked about this many times, didn’t we? I have completely recovered. Don't worry about me. I won't suddenly fall over."
"I am aware of that, but..."

Rose could be seen stuttering on her words.

"What about other matters? Yes, for example, there is an issue regarding safety, is there not?”
"You mean, like, if this Arachne's nest is safe?"

Safety issues… I see, there was also such a reason to oppose this, huh.
However, I have also thought about it.

"It's alright. If it comes to that, it's fine to wake Lily up. The way you two are now, whatever monster that comes, it wouldn’t take long for you guys to handle them.

Originally, only Lily and Rose had combat capabilities.
When we were living in the cave before, Lily went out in order to secure food and Rose was the only one as my escort. Compared to that, right now both Lily and Rose are fully equipped to guard the nest.

Lily isn’t in good condition currently, but it isn’t at a level where she cannot handle one or two fights.

“Besides, in the first place, wasn’t it said that monsters generally don’t approach this Arachne’s nest?”

It's rare for monsters to approach the nest of the White Arachne, who is a ‘High Monster’.
Actually, those monsters that did have been completely eliminated throughout the long years.
In other words, it was the mechanism of selection in evolution.

“I do not mind whatever that may befall us.”

Rose insisted strongly.

"What I am worried about is Master."
“...It's not something to be worried about. My escort is that White Arachne, a ‘High Monster’. There aren’t many monsters who can stand against her.”

While conversing, I suddenly became suspicious.
Despite all that, the thought that Rose was worrying too much came to me.

In the first place, Rose opposing my policy was unusual. If I were to say it, she’s the type to suppress her own feelings and silently follow the orders given.

And yet, why was she...
...No, rather…

Was it possible that Rose’s true intention was about *‘this’*?

“Why are you so against me going to the forest? Rose, are you perhaps hiding something?”
“...That is.”
“This is you we’re talking about. You’re probably thinking along the lines of ‘It’s because I didn’t comply with your will’, right? Stop thinking about weird things. If you are not satisfied with something, just say so. Since you’re part of my ‘Family of Monsters’, you’re a precious comrade.”

Even after I prompted her, she was still at a loss.

Even so, I patiently waited for her. She suddenly knelt down and lowered her head.

“I am very sorry, Master.”
“So, what’s wrong?”
“I already know of Master’s feelings towards us, your ‘Family of Monsters’. I am thankful for that, and have no intentions of ignoring it.”

With her head lowered, she started voicing out what was inside her heart.

At the same time, the apologetic feelings within her heart… As well as something like a sense of shame from her, flowed to me through the path.

But… against what?

The question that I held was answered as Rose continued.

“However, for me… I absolutely cannot trust that Gerbera like Anesama did.”
“...What did you say?”

For me, this was an unexpected confession.
While I said nothing, Rose continued to speak.

“Could you at least wait until either Ane-sama or me can freely move?”

To summarize, the thing that she wanted to say was, ‘Because Gerbera can not be trusted, it should be herself or Lily who becomes the escort.’

I felt somewhat dizzy.
It was because I understand just how serious Rose was.

"So, that's the true reason why you are against me going into the forest?"
"I am truly sorry."

Rose bowed more deeply as I inquired of her.

"You are not going to forgive her?"
"...No."
"I see."

Ah, damn it.
This happened because of my mistake.

Rather, I should have predicted this thing.

I had completely forgotten that possibility after Lily had readily accepted it.

Rose was different from Lily.
The role that she took was to guarantee the safety of my well being, acting as my guardian.

She wouldn't tolerate it, if I, as her Master, were to be hurt.
That was her principle.

—I exist in order to protect Master. For that purpose, I don’t mind if this body has to turn into chips of wood.

Those were the words which Rose had told me.
Her very reason to exist is to protect me.

It must have been natural for her to not forgive Gerbera, who had hurt me. Rather, in regards to that matter, I must be the one to conform to it instead.

“I am truly sorry.”
“You don’t have to apologize again and again. There’s nothing we can do about that feeling of not wanting to forgive her…”

Even if I’m told to forgive the students who bullied me back in the ‘Colony’, it’s impossible.

If I think about it again… They must have fallen into a panic. It was a state of emergency. Those guys were usually good people. They were innocent. It was because of the bad situation… I’ve thought about that possibility.

It’s merely thinking about it.
But I really don’t believe in those thoughts at all.

Even if all of them died, I would not even feel a shred of pity towards them; to me, they would have been nothing more than pile of dead bodies.

There is a part that can never be comprehended with reason that exists within the thing that is called the ‘human heart’.

Lily on the other hand, had already forgiven Gerbera. Even so, it’s not that Rose was a small-minded person compared to her.
Lily prioritized my feelings, while Rose, who was practical, focused on the safety of my well-being.

These were the girls’ characters, it couldn’t be denied that this was the result of their personality. At least, I wouldn’t completely deny it.

In addition to that… Frankly said, this incident was all Gerbera’s fault.
It’s the truth that the White Arachne, the embodiment of violence itself, had injured us.
After being reformed, her spiderly nature still had not changed.

You can’t cover up what you’ve done in the first place.
No matter how much you regretted it, the past can’t be changed.

Of course, I do believe in Gerbera.
I want the Family to believe in her.

However, it’s wrong for me to order Rose to get friendly to Gerbera, right? That’s not a true friendship built on trust. If it’s like that, the relationship between the two would be totally different from what I wished.

From now on, Gerbera must win back the trust that she had lost from her first meeting. However, this is not supposed to be something that needs to be worried about as much as it is.

Let’s build trust steadily.

Compared to the normal way of building a relationship between humans, what we have between us here is unconventional instead.

Disregarding myself… The incident where Lily had readily agreed and accepted the once-hostile White Arachne, for example, was far from the norm.

—Winning Rose's trust.
The quickest way to do that is by 'showing Rose my usefulness', or something like that.

Using that means would produce result; as such, asking Gerbera to go out to the forest as my escort was the right thing to do.

What Gerbera needs right now, are results to prove her trustability.
If there are results, Rose will eventually recognize her efforts. Fortunately, Rose thinks rationally. If she believes that Gerbera has already reflected on her behaviour, it shouldn't be that hard.

Besides, the current situation was very harsh to Rose.

Even Rose didn’t want to doubt Gerbera if possible, as she was also a part of the Family.
If it wasn’t not like that, then I wouldn't have received feelings of ‘shame’ from Rose’s confession.

Because both of them want to meet the other halfway, they’ll be alright.

As long as we live, there's no such thing as not having problems at all. We have to settle even the small problems one by one.

Isn't it obvious that it's my job, as the girls’ Master, to help them?

After I finished my conversation with Rose, I went out of the Arachne's nest.

Gerbera had been waiting there.
She was sitting with her spider legs bent while looking up at the sky absent-mindedly.

The talk with Rose had taken some time. I had seemingly made her wait in vain. I have done a bad thing.

“Sorry to have kept you waiting.”
“Nay, I have not waited.”

Gerbera lowered her line of sight that was directed to the sky and showed a stiff expression.

I leaned my head to the side.

“Did something happened?”
“U-umu. What wert thee saying?”

Gerbera immediately got up and turned her back to face me.

“Look. If we do not make haste, the day shall soon end. I wish to be home ere the sun sets,”

Her spoken words made her more suspicious.
I set out from the Arachne's nest while feeling a bit of suspicion.

* * *

We encountered an insect-type monster called Stub Beetle in the forest where we were living.

Stub Beetles could be as big as seventy centimeters. At a glance, they appear to be giant rhinoceros beetles.
Their bodies are covered with a bulky outer shell, the robustness of which is probably one of the top in this forest.
The cone-shaped horn which looks like a lance doesn’t seem easily broken by small impacts.

Its specialty is launching a charging attack from mid-air.

This is a simple yet powerful attack. Previously, in the Colony, there was one victim who fell due of it.

The Stub Beetle that we encountered, seems to be more vigilant than the previous one. The moment we heard something flying, it had already danced around in the high sky.

By this point of time, there's no possibility that it is a part of my ‘Family of Monsters’.
Besides the Stub Beetle clearly showing its hostility towards us, above all, the absence of feeling any path connecting us is proof.

The Stub Beetle aimed at me.

From the height of a few meters, its speed changed and its sturdy outer shell turned into a bullet-like weapon.
Even if I were to avoid this living bullet, the Stub Beetle, which is in our line of sight, it would just turn its aim from above. At this rate, it would shoot through me and it was possible that my upper body may be separated from my lower body.

“Entrust it to me.”

The Stub Beetle was flying with a speed that can't be followed by the eyes but Gerbera, who was beside me, threw out her thread to change its course.

Not minding the thread that hit and stuck to it, the giant rhinoceros beetle whom had originally aimed at me, tried to rush at me.

But Gerbera didn't stop at that.

“Hrgh.”

Planting her eight legs on the ground firmly, she pulled the thread that looked thin at the first glance and the supposedly power-type monster, the Stub Beetle, instantly lost its balance.

Its course deviated, losing control and crashed mid-flight.
The round body of the Stub Beetle was thrusted at Gerbera as it bounced randomly along the way after being forcefully pulled at.

“This shall be thine end.”

Gerbera struck out one of her spider’s legs and crushed it instantly.
Like an expert spear fighter, the robust shell of the Stub Beetle was pierced through and sewed to the ground.

The Stub Beetle’s legs trembled and then became silent.

“It ended… huh.”
“Indeed.”

After carefully confirming it, I let out the breath that I had been holding.

I know Gerbera’s true power but, I’m still nervous when I’m in a real battle.

I still can’t get accustomed in life-and-death struggles.

”Would not this be a most wondrous time for a short rest, Milord?”

My mental fatigue might have been shown on my face. Gerbera offered it with a thoughtful expression.

“I think so.”

I gratefully accepted Gerbera’s offer.

I sat down on the spot.
I drank some water from the wooden container that we brought, and let out a small sigh. Not just mentally, but I was also physically fatigued.

Without even noticing it myself, I had probably overstressed my mind. I should take short breaks from now on.

Then, while I was checking my condition, Gerbera called out to me.

“Milord.”
“Yes?”
“I hath finished ‘packaging’."
“That was fast.”

On Gerbera’s hand, who was talking to me, was the Stub Beetle’s carcass wrapped in spider’s thread.

The ‘packaging’ that she mentioned seems to mean exactly that. Convenient to be carried around and ensuring that the contents will not be ‘spilled out’ in any way, the remains of the monster was rolled up in the spider’s thread.

Now then. the reason why she is purposely bringing back the remains of a monster, is that it is a souvenir for Lily who is now resting in the nest.
She has a mimicry ability which allows her to change into the prey she consumes.
In other words, if she can devour monsters that we have never met, it can be turned into her combat potential.

This isn’t today’s purpose, but it’s still a bonus achievement.
Not bad. Now then, If we are able to bring back a new member for the ‘Family’, it’ll be a great thing.

“Alright, let’s head out then.”
“Milord, please hold.”

When I stood up energetically, Gerbera let out a reproach towards me.

“Thee wert only just seated. Wherefore do thee not rest some more, for Milord doest not have much endurance.”
"...Well, if you compare me with you guys, monsters, then I guess I am really weak."

As a man, I felt kind of hurt being talked like I have a weak constitution, but the one who said it was the White Arachne. From her point of view, it isn’t weird even if she sees me as being weaker than a baby.

"I understand. I will rest some more."
"Umu.”

I sat down again on the spot with crossed legs.
Nodding as if she is satisfied seeing that, Gerbera folded her eight legs and sat down.

About three meters from me.

"..."

"...Aren’t you too far away?"

There isn’t supposed to be a feeling of distance when there’s only two of us, right?
Not to mention that it was hard to talk like this.
It suspiciously feels like the distance one takes when they hated the other person.

“F-forsooth?”

Gerbera awkwardly moved her gaze away.
She’s frankly being suspicious.

I can’t help but think that something has happened.

"Gerbera?"

When I called out her name, her shoulder flinched in response.

"Wh-what is it?"
"..."

"Uuu..."

I continued staring at her until her upper body drooped, just like a white lily wilting.

Looks like she got the idea. Being honest is a good thing.

"What's wrong?"

After I asked, she opened her mouth timidly.

"...Art thee fine with this, Milord?"
"What's this about?"

As I expressed my non-understanding, she continued with an awkward tone.

“I… Just the other night, I hadst attacked thee, Milord. Art not thee slightly careless by being alone with me?”
If I could sum it up in one word, she had a demeanor that seemed as though she was going to *disappear* from this very place.

"Gerbera, you…"

Then, a thought came to me.

"You overheard my conversation with Rose?"
"Wh-what art thee speaking of!?"

The pitch of her voice increased and the gaze of her scarlet eyes kept swimming around.
No matter what, isn’t she too panicked?

Acting like this isn’t any different from her admitting it herself.

“You heard us, didn’t you?”

I let out a sigh and walked towards her, who was averting her gaze.

She flinched her shoulder but did not try to run away.
She only looked down as if giving up.

"That's why you are acting strange."
“...Umu.”

Rose was against me going exploring with Gerbera to the forest.
Gerbera overheard that and knows that Rose is suspicious of her, and so she decided to keep her distance with me.

The moment we went out into the forest with only the two of us, there was no longer any meaning in keeping some sort of distance between us… No. There's nothing else to say. I knew that she was clumsy. If I had known that, I would not have committed a failure like the one that night.

The problem is that Gerbera took it very heavily.
The reason why she was so down was probably because she had already been blaming herself inside.

After that one time when she was our enemy, it seems that she, who we call Gerbera now, felt like she owed a large debt to us.

After doing a bit of thinking, I asked.

"Insecure, huh? What? Are you going to hurt us again, Gerbera?"
"Fie! Fie upon that! I am truly grateful to ye, Milord!"

After she denied my words desperately, Gerbera realized something, dropped her legs and her shoulder on the spot.

"However, I, myself hath thought the same thoughts as what Lady Rose hadst spoken of, for she hast a point."

Even though she was a gorgeous beauty, that figure that shrunk into itself in depression, only looks like a large flower that has wilted and closed.

"I am dangerous, Milord. I may harm thee and the others again. 'Tis a fact…"

This seems to be quite a serious wound.
I confirmed it and furrowed my eyebrows internally.

We are a team of few people.
And so, we can't afford not to combine our power together in order to survive in this world.

If one feels too indebted to the others, it will probably create a discord.

It is my job as their Master to take care of the Family.
In addition to that, as I was the one who took her in as an ally, I have to take care of her

properly.

Well half of it is my official stance. But my true intention is to not let her be left alone while feeling down.

But, how do I cheer her up?
Gerbera, with her head down, opened her mouth while I was thinking in front of her.

“Milord and the others have accepted me. I desire to present mine usefulness to Milord and the others. This be my true intention.”

She clasped her hands together and looked up towards me with her scarlet eyes that were slightly averted.

“H-however, the fact that I have just been born cannot be changed. Even now, I *still* desire to monopolize thee and capture thee. ...Nay. Moreso than when we met yesterday, I feel that this sensation in my heart hath been ever growing.”

Saying that, transparent smoldering affection can be seen in her scarlet eyes that were constantly sneaking glances at me.

“Thou hast forgiven me, but I may wound ye again eventually. It terrifies me that it may happen again.”

Gerbera, the White Arachne, is a spider.
It was her natural instincts to catch her prey and tie them up.
Thinking of wanting to do it is natural for her, above she being herself, this is something that isn’t something that can be changed.

…Although.
Even if you think so, whether do you really put it in action, the real ones may not be the same.
I think that way, and I believe so.

"Calm down, Gerbera."

In the end, I told her my opinion honestly.

"You won't hurt me… No, you won't hurt us ever again."

Besides, we are connected through the path between us. There is a high possibility of seeing through any deception or lies. That’s why, it’s best to convey feelings directly.
That’s what I have determined.

“Milord, why dost thee think so?”

The things that I had said seems unexpected to her. Gerbera’s lower body that is of a spider made a clicking sounds as she lifted her body.

“What Lady Rose hath said is correct. Even I, myself, cannot believeth in mine own self. But wherefore doth Milord believest so?”
"Why, huh... That is, it's because I saw your figure that night."

That night, Gerbera should have visualized how she would spent her life alone after that.
Just in the short time that we’ve met, the number of times that she was shaken by loneliness was several times that of what she has ever felt since she was alive.
I understand, because I had the same experience as well.

That's why I believe so.
If that has been the most painful feeling she had ever felt, she would be fine, is what I thought.

“You said, ‘You’re scared that you will hurt us’, right? If you feel that way, then you’ll be alright. You’ll not betray our trust. Well, isn’t that so? Just by having the fear of hurting us in the future, it already means that you earnestly care about us.”

That’s why there’s nothing to be worried about at all.
There isn’t any chance of Gerbera losing herself to her desires and hurting us.

There’s something more important than that for her.

"I believe in you."

I held Gerbera’s hand of the girl that drooped in front of the spider’s body. It'll be good to show her my trust here. It'll be great if it becomes can strengthen her.

"That's why, you should believe in yourself more."
"Milord..."

Gerbera looked at me motionlessly.
Or so I thought, but she suddenly lowered her face.
My hand was shaken off, and I stiffened in surprise.

"Ge-Gerbera?"
"Ah, Milord..."

A voice that sounded like a moan.
Gerbera hit her face with both her hands and lowered her head, as if trying to use her long hair to hide it
But, there's pretty much no point in hiding her face. Her ears that are peeking out from the mess of hair, are bright red, and her bare nape that was revealed as she looked downwards was dyed vermillion.

"Gerbera? You, what hap-..."
“Ah, Milord. I understand. I now know truly well that thee hast faith in me, as a member of the ‘Family’, from the bottom of thine heart.”

Gerbera raised one of her hands, and stopped the words of I, who was worrying about her.

"That's why, let us leave it at that.”

Gerbera confessed with a low voice to the confused me.

“...I may not be able to contain myself any longer.”
“I see.”

She was convinced.
From just now, I’ve been thinking that the spider legs have been noisily, making clinking sounds.

She had managed to endure it somehow.

Keeping one’s promise is good. At this rate, her self-control would not be in vain.

I waited patiently until she had calmed down.

“...I apologize to hath made thee wait, Milord.”

Finally, Gerbera lifted her reddened face up.
It wasn't a gloomy face, which then made me feel relieved.

“At any rate. I know now that Milord hast faith in me.”
"It's not only me, Lily, too is the same."
“Indeed. But Lady Rose hast not.”
"Well, it seems like that but..."
"Oh, Milord. Whatever shall I do?"

It isn't just a simple griefing.
The words that came out of Gerbera's mouth displayed her resolve on how to handle the situation now.

"Gerbera, do you want earn Rose's trust?"
"Of course."
"I see."

I unconsciously patted Gerbera’s silver head, happy with that unhesitating reply.

"Then, you’ll have to put effort into it for that."
“Aye…“

Showing a very happy face, Gerbera's white cheeks were dyed vermillion.

"If you really want to earn someone’s trust, you must build it up from the bottom."
“Yes. That seemeth so.”

Gerbera nodded with a slightly reddened face.

“We have to firstly complete this exploration successfully. Aye, I understand. I shall use all that is in my power to aid Milord.”
"Right. I'm counting on you."

The expression on Gerbera’s face is no longer faint.
It seems that her worries have been swept clean from her heart. A smile naturally floated across my lips knowing that.

"Well then, this time, let's go."
“Aye. Leave thy safeness during the journey to me.”

With our steps lightened, we resumed the exploration.

AUTHOR’S NOTES

◆It's been awhile since the last update.
Well, this is not about the story itself, it is about the previous chapter’s synopsis.

It's been the second time, huh.
Well, truthfully, last time I was studying about how to cook.

◆It’s Gerbera’s turn.
Clinking sounds
<TLN: Gerbera’s movement sound produced from her spider legs - Viniance>

◆The next update will be at 2/8 (Saturday).

Happy 1st anniversary to Re:Translations!
Here's our special release from the MoM team: Blesser, Kiddosr, Viniance, SurprisingClam, YourSQL
Special helper: CptCupcake

Blesser: We almost had chapter 4 up, but we ran outta ice cream. T-T
Viniance: Please give us some potatoes too, and have a good read :)
Kiddosr: No more marathons. I'm so unfit!
SurprisingClam: Huzzah! :D
CptCupcake: zzz… (He was asleep before we could ask him for some words)

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03. The Deep Hole Inside the Heart

Synopsis of previous chapter:
kichi kichi kichi kichi The girl who endured.
<TLN: kichi kichi is the clinking sound of Gerbera's spider feet -Viniance>

kichi kichi kichi kichi kichi... kichi... kichi

Chapter 3.

The forest is overflowing with danger.
All the more so for places that we've never been to.

There are a lot of things to be careful about, even when just moving through. It must not be forgotten that this place is not an area for humans.

...That is something that I *should've* understood, but it's human nature to want no mistakes.

"Uoo!?"

The foot I stepped forward with slipped.
Probably because of the fatigue, my view was blurred, and the sole of my foot lost its grip due to the thickly grown grass.

At that moment, I lost my balance.
The hand that I hurriedly stretched out towards a tree branch missed by just a little, and I ungracefully fell down flat—or perhaps I should say that I *began* to fall down flat?

“It is dangerous. Prithee be cautious Milord.”
"...My bad."

Gerbera immediately turned and caught me in her arms as I almost toppled over.

While remaining vigilant of the surroundings, she also seems to have been looking out for me.
What a quick response.

As a result, the back of my head is half-buried within her bountiful breasts, but Gerbera doesn’t seem to mind it. Her nice upside down face looked at me with worry.

“Art thou unharmed?”
"I have caused you trouble.”
“Such events art not particularly bothersome at all.”

Saying so, Gerbera checked that my feet were firmly on the ground.

“...”

After pushing my head further into her chest and clutching it tightly to hug it, she took her hands away and released me.

“...”
“W-what?”

I had turned around, and when I looked at her with reproachful eyes, Gerbera spoke with a high-pitched voice.
Her spider feet were making clinking *kichi kichi* noises. Evidently, this seems to be her habit.

“I-I pondered not any such acts like taking advantage of thee at all, for thy knowing.”
“There’s such a saying as ‘letting the cat out of the bag’, do you know its meaning?”
“S-somewhat.”
“...Well, whatever.”

It wouldn’t help anything even if I blamed her, so I wrapped up the topic and resumed the search.
With a relieved look, Gerbera starts progressing into the forest as well.

This time around, I'll be careful while walking in the forest. I walked while muttering that.

"This is… troubling."

It's embarrassing to think about something like this, but Gerbera seems to harbor a clear affection towards me.

I'm not so thick-headed that I don't notice her feelings towards me after it has been openly shown to that extent.

And yet if it was my usual self, I might have doubted myself, questioned whether I was simply being conceited in thinking her affections were intended for me, but….

I'm not particularly the type that's popular among the opposite sex.
My face isn't one that would be called ugly, but it's not the type that would be called good-looking either. I daresay that it's a face that gives off a diligent-esque impression—one with purely *mediocre* features.
I am aware that it's one of a man that's boring to be and talk with.

A man like me couldn't possibly attract an attractive person of the opposite sex so easily.
If the other party hadn't been Gerbera, there was a high possibility that I would have thought so.

But Gerbera's honest behaviour didn't allow me to 'escape' like that.

I was honestly happy to be the target of such clear affection.

I have no idea how a normal guy would feel about a girl with the bottom-half of a spider liking him…

Would he feel happy?
Would he not even feel disgusted?
From the viewpoint of those humans, I'm probably a mere deviant.

So what if that's the case?
After all that's happened, I have no intention of being bothered by things like others' opinions.

I like her as a companion would.
Even if that were to progress into a relationship between a man and a woman, there was not that much of a psychological opposition towards it.

However, I have already accepted Lily's affection with my body.
As a man born and raised in Japan with normal sensibilities, I happen to have the feeling that a man should only love one woman in his life.
As a man, I can't respond to Gerbera's affections.
According to my values, that would be a dishonest course of action, a betrayal that should not occur.

That's what I think. ...At the very least, I *would've* stopped thinking further if it was a human girl.

However, at the same time, I can't help but be aware of the fact that this isn't modern Japan, and that I'm in an alternate world.

I am the Master of these girls, this Family of Monsters.
I know that these girls think of me as a special existence, just as they are special to me.
That's what I was able to learn—almost too well—on the night we overcame life and death.

The relationship between the girls and I is the kind that does not exist in the previous world.
Of course, I should not bring over values from those days, it's clear that it was impossible to do so.

I must thoroughly reconsider this from scratch.
Regarding my relationship with the girls…

…*and* about Gerbera and Rose's relationship, there are so many things to consider that I feel like I'm going to get a headache..

However, this is something related to the girls, who are important to me. I must think it over seriously—no, I want to think it over seriously.

Should I be happy about being able to afford the luxury of worrying over things like this?

"Wherefore art thee troubled?"

Gerbera turned around; she seems to have heard my monologue.
There's no way that I can possibly answer her honestly and tell her that I'm worrying about my relationship with her from now on. I smiled vaguely.

"I was thinking that the search for monsters that can become a part of my Family doesn't seem to be going well."

It was a line I said to dodge the question, but that in itself was actually a troubling situation.

It has already been three days since the two of us started searching.
During these three days, we couldn't find any new monsters for the Family, despite bravely searching.

It's not as if we didn't gain anything at all.
There was something called 'Rifle Vine' back at the Colony placed on Gerbera's lower-half, the spider part of her plump abdomen, that we're bringing back. This is a monster that takes on the appearance of vine-type vegetation entwined around trees, and fires out seeds from a lily-like flower as if they were buckshot.
This will further increase Lily's strength if given to her.
Also, it may be insignificant at this stage, but every time Gerbera defeats a monster, she accumulates magical power. That's definitely not something meaningless.

The exploration itself is smooth.
However, it doesn't have the 'result' that I'm wishing for.

In the first place, why did I think to set out on a search as soon as I could?
That's partly because I couldn't stand spending time not doing anything, but more importantly, it's largely because our situation has changed.

Although the fight with the White Arachne was fierce, we overcame the crisis by combining our strengths, and as a result, we were able to gain a strong ally.

It's fair to say that the situation that we were placed in had, with that night as the turning point, changed greatly.

There's even no need to compare it with what's happened so far; the future is bright.

The White Arachne, now named Gerbera, is one of the strongest monsters in this forest. The fact that there aren't many monsters that can go head to head with her, is conversely demonstrated by Lily and Rose's desperate fight.

Even by just being unafraid of the threat of normal monsters, our freedom of movement dramatically increases.
In addition to that, because 'Rare Monsters' and above are the targets for my cheat ability, they aren't a threat.
I daresay that in regards to 'High Monsters' like Gerbera, there may be dangers that accompany coming into contact with them as there were when we encountered Gerbera… but we aspired to come into contact with them, and it doesn't seem like they're something that can be stumbled upon.

In the interest of safety, up until now we had no choice but to act with prudence, but that's no longer the case. For the sake of gathering more members for the Family, we can now take even more audacious actions.

For example, the present situation of searching the forest with just Gerbera accompanying me, is one of those more audacious actions.
Even in the situation where Lily isn't able to move, I'm able to continue the search.

However, not having any results to go with that, is unfortunate.

"This is a little… We should change our method after all."

Not having any luck with our search is simply because my way of doing it is bad.
Even with our current method of searching, from a time efficiency viewpoint, it's by no means wrong.
What's wrong is that there is no change from before.

In order to raise its efficacy, we needed to choose a more efficient method.

First is the need to change the search area.
The cause of the search not turning out well is, above all, related to the encounters with monsters: largely because we couldn't manage to get enough monster encounters to be efficient.

Eight within three days.
Within this short period of time, it's by no means a bad number, but like this, it can't be helped that there were no monsters that seemed like they could become part of my Family of Monsters.

In order to get a large number, we needed to travel a slightly longer distance.
The area in this vicinity is still affected by the hunt that the Scouting Corps conducted. If we go further away, we should be able to encounter more monsters.

"Milord?"
"..."

I had fallen silent and was staring at Gerbera, who was gazing questioningly at me.
Also, for the sake of getting Rose to trust her, we must get some results.

"There's something I want to tell you, Gerbera..."

I renewed my determination, and facing the two red pupils fixed on me, I began to talk.

* * *

After I found an opening in the forest and sat down there, Gerbera made a meek face and asked for my thoughts.

“So to say, Milord would desire me to taketh thee yonder?”
“Well, I don’t mind if you understand it in such a manner. But if there’s a place where there are loads of monsters, that’s fine as well.”

Gerbera’s eyebrows furrowed.

“Umu. I see. If it is so, then I do know of such a place.”
“Really? It would be great if we can make it there within a day’s trip if possible.”

If we can’t make it within a day’s trip, there was a possibility that Rose would be against it.

“Umu. It is one of many springs hither forth, but many creatures drink from them, so it shant be difficult to encounter monsters.”
“Oh. That’s good.”

I wanted such information like that.

“Alright. Shall we try going there today?”
“Understood. Allow me.”

Perhaps happy to be of help, Gerbera’s voice was lively.

“Well then, let’s work out the details. Sorry, but please take part in the discussion.”
“T-thee speakest of me?”

However, the moment I proposed a discussion, Gerbera faltered.

“Is it troublesome?”
“N-nay. Not at all.”

Gerbera waved her hands about in front of her chest in a panic.

“My thoughts led me to believe that others were more apt.”
“Even if I’m told that…”

I scratched my head.

“Gerbera is the only one here, right?”
“U-umu you speak truth but… would Milord be willing if we were to return for a short while today?”
“Hmm. Even if you say that...”
“What?”
“Take Lily for example: honestly, I don’t really want to place a burden on her.”

I want to let her focus on recuperating. It seems that she’ll have soon recovered enough to move around without any issues, but nevertheless, I don’t really want to trouble her with our problems.

“I can’t tell Rose. You should know that.”
“Hum. That is true.”

Gerbera showed a slightly crestfallen look. Even she knows that if we discussed it with Rose, there was a high possibility of it being rejected.

“Yet, is it not still improper for me? I am but a damsel that has relied on brute strength to solve all issues hitherto. Nor am I the sharpest.”
“But I don’t think so.”

Having conversed with Gerbera for the past few days now, I don’t think she’s worse than the other Monsters of the Family at using her head. She is simply young at heart and awkward; moreover, it’s just that our initial meeting went sour—by no means does it mean that she is a stupid person.

However, it appears that she herself does not think so.

“Is there not another to discuss with possibly? Such as… Ah, there is Kato; how about that terrifying young lady?”

Gerbera’s evaluation of Kato-san has become quite terrible.

It’s also strange that Gerbera—who is overwhelmingly strong even amongst my travelling companions—is afraid of Kato-san, who is the weakest in strength. That just goes to show the extent to which Kato-san had dominated the argument that night.

“That young lady is of merit. Rather than one such as I, she would be of more worth in such a discussion.”

Certainly, if I discussed this with Kato-san, there’s a possibility that she would be able to give

suggestions of some sort.
She just has something that makes a person have expectations of her.
By all rights, Gerbera's suggestion wasn't that bad.

However, I couldn't help but shake my head from side to side.

"What I'll discuss with Kato-san is, how do I put it… something different."
"How doth it differ?"
"Well…"

When faced with this question, I was stumped.

That's because, if she has been associating with Lily and Rose so far, she would have understood what I wanted her to.

"Kato-san isn't a part of the Family. She's human."
"Is being human so terrible?"

Gerbera's expression turned more and more bewildered.
As if my words wouldn't get through in any way.

"If she is human, doth that mean that she is not our companion? However, the night that I committed my transgressions, she aided Milord, together with Lady Lily and Lady Rose."
"That's…"

I tried to refute Gerbera's point, but I couldn't find the words.
Because what Gerbera said was right.

Kato-san is a human, but she had fought for my sake.
I don't mean that she had held a weapon in her hands, but she, in her own way, put her life on the line for me. She had bet her life to save mine.

That's why… No. Wait. The conversation has turned in a weird direction.

I have a bad feeling about this. I don't know what's bad about it, but to me, this conversation is… How do I say it… inconvenient.
It had that sort of feeling to it.

Without noticing my consternation, Gerbera continued to enquire.

"Surely, she is one of Milord's companions - that was my thought. However, if that is not the case, then what is Lady Kato's relationship with Milord? "

Hearing Gerbera's question, I suddenly recalled Kato-san's reserved smile..

——"It's good that you're alright, senpai."
——"Yes. Towards senpai, who was the Master, being believed in, trusted in, relied on and loved by... Those are things that bring happiness, aren't they?"
——"That's it! That's decided then."

"..."

Actually, when did I start being concerned about Kato-san?
I got the feeling that my impression of that person—no, Kato-san—had changed that night.

By speaking to her, most of the uneasiness I felt about her no longer exists——but if I told her that, would it be conveyed instead?

I had also considered whether it was because she had mentally recovered, but something about that also doesn't sound right.

She has indeed spoken a lot more than in the past, and as a result, the number of times that her smiles were shown has increased.
This is cannot be anything but change.
However, it isn't something that can be called dramatic.

It's not as if Kato-san's basic expressions are lively even now; if anything, her expressionless and gloomy impression hasn't changed. She continues to have glazed eyes, and her occasional smiles are merely her lips being slightly upturned; it somehow feels like there's a shadow over her.

She didn't really change much from before.
But my eyes can see that *something* is different from before.

…No, Wait.
Isn't this *that*?

Having thought that far, I suddenly noticed my misunderstanding.

Kato-san herself 'has not changed at all'. Despite this, she 'seems different'.
So that means it's more natural to think that 'my perspective has changed' instead, doesn't it?

That night, when I was captured by the White Arachne, Kato-san exposed herself to danger to save me.

I was helped by her.
That was why my perspective of her had changed slightly. Isn't it that sort of thing?

Thinking back on it, I've always been suspicious of Kato-san ever since I met her.
I had always looked at her from this perspective: 'She'll surely betray us.'
If you were to look through distorted lens, then naturally, any scenery you see through it will seem distorted.
Now, after all that has happened, I can finally look at her without any bias.

It's probably something like that.

Now that I've noticed it, I wonder what should I do now?

Just now, Gerbera asked what Kato-san was to me.
To me, she's my ward.
Nothing more, nothing less.
Thinking that, I have never built a relationship with her until now.

But now, however…
Could it be that I am—for the first time—at the starting point for me to build a relationship with her?

If that's the case…
She even put her life on the line in order to save me; shouldn't I at least return her trust?

"..."

I was nearly killed by my acquaintances, my classmates, at the Colony in the past.
Humans are disgusting.
You never know when they will betray you. That has been, and still is, a core part of my unwavering values.

But as far as Kato-san is concerned, the possibility of her betraying us is probably low.
Such a thing shouldn't be possible for that sort of human who went as far as betting their own life to save me.

Thinking about it logically, it doesn't seem like I've thought much about it at all.
Even theoretically speaking, it's strange for me to be doubting her.
Above all, my senses are telling me that it's okay to trust her.

That's why… once again… it might be okay to try and trust her—only her.

But it might be too late.
This time for sure, I will trust her…
Yes. Trust…

“Urg…”

Nausea abruptly surged up, and I promptly moved away from there.

“Ah, Milord!?”

I could hear Gerbera’s fretting voice behind me, but I didn’t have the time to worry about it.
The moment I leaned on a nearby tree, I threw up everything I had in my stomach on its roots.

In my head——I was looked down upon by eyes, eyes, the *eyes*!

The pain revives. Suffering. Sadness. A downtrodden heart. Why me? Why the lot of you?
The underside of shoes on my forehead, sent flying with a kick, abnormal sounds from my ribs. It hurts. It *hurts*. I’m afraid. Then eyes meet. Eyes that have lost their light. Eyes of a corpse. *Become just like me*, the acquaintance whom was already killed. Also, the acquaintance who I killed. I don’t want to die. I don’t want to believe this!
If I turned my gaze upwards, I feel like there would be a frozen grin.
Grin. Grin. Grin.

“A-, ga… urgh.”
“A-art thee ill, Milord?!”

Gerbera, who had followed after me closely, placed her hand on my shoulder. I immediately jerked away as though a hot object had scalded me.

At that moment, feelings of worry for me flowed into me through the path. Gerbera’s heart, who is anxious about me. Confusion on not knowing what should be done. Also, lamentation.

‘She, a monster of the Family’s emotions regarding ‘Me the Master’, all of it.

“...Ah?”

And so, I was finally able to remember that this place was not the collapsing Colony.
I became conscious of the present and my identity; that became the link that I had to rely on—one that led me from my mindscape back into reality.

My vision blurred.
When I came to, my cheeks had tears spilled all over it.

“Gerbe… ra?”
“Milord! Art thee awake?!”

Although I would feel better if my back was rubbed, as a monster, Gerbera doesn’t seem to know what to do. I could hear a voice that’s on the verge of crying.

“Ah, Milord. Hath I spoken some ill?”
“It’s nothing like… U-ugh.”

As I tried to speak to a flustered Gerbera, I vomited again.

“A-ah… Milord!”
“I… I’m alright, so calm down a little.”

It’s the presence of a flustered Gerbera; it seems to have reminded me that I’m her Master; it functioned like a tranquilizer.

I spat out saliva mixed with vomit.
Alright. My lips are still trembling, but this should make it slightly easier to talk.

I wiped the corners of my mouth and faced Gerbera.

“I was just a little tired. It’s not a big deal.”
“Indeed? Yet thy visage is white as a sheet.”
“Not a problem, if I rest a bit, it’ll subside right away. You probably don’t know, but humans are delicate creatures.”

They were words I used to gloss over the facts, but the latter half of it was too true to be funny.

Ah, shit. How unsightly.

“...Sorry, but could you bring me the water bottle? The inside of my mouth feels disgusting.”

My water bottle was lying on the ground at the place where I was resting at until a while ago. It was troublesome to walk even there in this condition.

“Y-yes. Understood. Wait upon me.”

Gerbera shot over like a bullet, rushing to the water bottle.
Gazing blankly at her back, I peeked into the deep pit in my heart and was shocked.

Even I myself, never thought that I was this abnormal.

It seems that my distrust towards humans had taken root on a physiological level.
Moreover, the fact that I've never noticed it until now is in itself a sign that the condition is severe.

I recalled the term 'PTSD'.
'Paranoia' came to mind as well, but I didn't know much about it.
<TLN: Only in Japan, usage and understanding of 'PTSD' > 'paranoia'...
Anyway, PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. -Blesser>

PTSD is a type of mental disorder that occurs due to the emotional scars after experiencing tragic near-death experiences.
Because the thing called the 'human heart' is a fragile thing, sometimes it can easily collapse before the greatest fear called 'death'. Or alternatively, PTSD may also develop in a situation when a person's dignity is lost.

The person takes an 'avoidance response' towards the trauma-inducing incident, as well as circumstances that are related to that incident; it causes 'flashbacks' about that incident and they fall into a panic and get a 'feeling of unwellness'.

For my case, it's rather easy to understand. It's 'my classmates' betrayal and attempted murder'.

This time, I tasted the symptoms of my first panic attack… I see, it was the worst feeling.
Because Gerbera, one of the Monsters in my Family was nearby, I was able to recover, but if she hadn't been there, I might have ended up fainting instead.

I became aware of my own mental issues, and at the same time, I had to admit one other fact.

That is, 'I can't trust Kato-san from the bottom of my heart'.

…Just hypothetically.

Whether I can allow Kato-san to wield a weapon.
Whether I can entrust my back to her.

Whether there's actually a need to do these things wasn't the issue in this case.
That's basically what it means to trust another person; as it didn't seem like I could do either of them, *that* was a big problem.

“Ah, Milord! I have brought water!”
“...Thanks.”

I gave my thanks and took the water bottle from Gerbera.
I rinsed my mouth; after drinking some water, I calmed down a little.

However, I did not have the strength to stand.
I shakily walk away from the tree roots that had my vomit splattered over it and sit down heavily.

While doing so, I remembered Kato-san’s ‘eyes’.
The moment we met, and the occasional times when she showed that gaze.

As if filled with obsession of which the bottom cannot be seen... No. That’s also, ‘different’. It’s different.
Now, from my eyes, I can see that as something else.

Those something that were intently watching me as a human... They were simply pupils and that was all they were doing.

When I try to open the lid, there’s nothing complicated about it at all. Her intentions were clear.
In this alternate world, there’s no one else Kato-san can rely on other than me.

It’s natural for someone in her position to decide to rely on me. Even if it was partly calculative, she had gone through a painful experience, and if I tried putting myself in her shoes, especially on an emotional level, I’m sure that I would’ve done the same.

It was such a simple thing, but my past self could not understand her feelings.
Because I couldn’t understand her, I had thought that it was something ominous… No, I arbitrarily decided so. I had thought that ‘she must be scheming something’.

As a result, I could not reciprocate the only feeling she had directed towards me.
Also, I’ll be unable to reciprocate it even in the future.

Despite knowing all of this, my body and heart still rejects her, a ‘human’.
This body of mine was too cold-hearted towards her—even though she was the one who saved my life.

Above all, the girl called Kato Mana is too pitiful.
I can imagine her loneliness. I understand her feelings—as if I could take her feelings into my hands—because I was the same in the past.

Even though I understand, I can do nothing about it.

“...What ‘If you’re going to think that you want someone to believe in you, then you have to pile stuff on top just that much’? Hah.”
"Milord…?"

Those were the words I told Gerbera, who was calling out to me worriedly, a few days ago.
Surpassing time, those words pierced my heart directly in the present.

What a farce this is.

That line is something that I should never speak from my mouth.
That's because, even though Kato-san had done her best for my sake, it’s not possible for her to obtain my trust.

"Milord..."

Gerbera has been flustered for a while now.
It looks like she didn’t know what to do at a time such as this. It couldn’t be helped. Even I myself do not know what I should do.

Eventually, she sat down lightly at my side.
When she sat down beside me, the spider legs that she folded, naturally faced me.

Just slightly attracted to the spider legs, I leaned against them.
The white fur feels good. Even though what I'm touching is anthropoid of a bug, I didn’t feel disgusted at all. Rather, I felt relaxed by it.

It was then that Gerbera spoke timidly.

“Apologies, Milord.”
"Hm?"
“My thoughtless words hast caused this.”

It seems that it was impossible to cover up my body's poor physical condition after all.
Perhaps feeling guilty, Gerbera's tone of voice was dispirited.

“I am unable to understand Milord’s feelings. I comprehend not the issues between Milord and Lady Kato either. Perhaps I have met Milord too late...”

Gerbera does not share my detest towards humans.

It was because she became a part of my Family after my heart had been healed to a certain extent.

What I'm dealing with is a deep wound that has not yet finished healing.
Gerbera can't do anything about it at all. She had inadvertently touched it with her bare hands.

"...No."

However, I shook my head.

"I have to thank you."
"Eh...?"
"If Gerbera wasn't here, I would have remained oblivious to my mistake."

If it had been Lily or Rose, this would probably not have happened.
They understand the feelings I harbor towards humans, resulting in them being overly careful of my feelings.

Of course, Gerbera *had* made me depressed, but by no means was it intentional. She would have seen it as a failure.
However, this is a worthy failure.

"Sorry, could you let me stay like this for a while longer?"

When I asked her, she nodded moment by moment, although she made an indiscreet face.

"Thanks."

I closed my eyes.
I pondered while remaining in that position.

I had misjudged Kato-san.
Because of that, I had made her feel lonely. Despite that, she had even bet her life and fought for my sake.

If that’s the case, then I must answer her.

Can I actually overcome these wounds of mine and also repay Kato-san for what she has done for me?

It'll probably take time. It could be impossible. Even so, in order to do this, I must make an effort to do so. Because this is the duty I must fulfil as someone who has become indebted to her.

About now, I wonder what Kato—who must be lonely—is doing? When I think about it, I don't feel that much pain in my heart.

<Author's Notes>

The continuance of Gerbera's turn.
...Or so you thought, but it's Kato-san's. It's a little heavy.

It's also the story about the protagonist's condition.
It'll be good if I've depicted it nicely... but it's difficult to do so.

The next update will be on 2/12 (Wednesday).

Draft version: <04/11/2015>
We were actually gonna further edit the chapter but decided on releasing what we have currently instead...

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04. A Puppet's Desire

Synopsis of previous chapter:
Trauma-sensei works too hard!

Chapter 4. ~Rose's POV~

Crafting is almost equivalent to the meaning of my existence.
I picked up my beloved knife as usual and began to shave the moderately sized piece of lumber.

As long as it is a Magical Puppet, each and every one would have a magical knife like this that is capable of processing lumber to one's content.

That being said, of course the creator's skill is important.

Normal Magical Puppets create tools only when needed. However, I have been constantly creating new tools on a daily basis, in accordance with Master's requests. Perhaps as a result, my magical tool creation skills have been improving as of late; enough that even I can tell the difference.

If only I could create better items.
Because if I could do that, I would be more useful to Master.

Time spent shaving wood thusly, are moments of bliss to me.
I feel a definite sense of being useful doing so.

Right now, I feel *alive*.
To the extent that I ended up having such outrageous thoughts, even though I am but a puppet without even blood circulation.

For me, the monster who was bestowed with the name of ‘Rose’, there were two moments of birth.

The first, was when I was created as a monster referred to as a ‘Magical Puppet’.
A female monster, the same species as me, roamed around in this deep forest while slowly accumulating magical power from the surrounding atmosphere, and created a copy of itself.
Among the numerous products created this way, one of them was myself.

And the second, of course, was at that time, when I met Master.
In that instant, this nameless Magical Puppet gained character and became the individual known as ‘Rose’.

From that day onwards, Master has bestowed upon me the precious duty of producing various items, beginning with weapons and armor.

At times I have been asked to create magically imbued armaments; at others, daily necessities or simple furniture.

Thus, at present, I am manufacturing replacements for the destroyed armaments in the Arachne’s nest.

“...”

There was an intent gaze that watched me as I worked on them.

It is not Master.
He has departed to search the forest.
Brushing aside my objections… No, that is fine.
For now.

Right now, it is this gaze that is right in front of me.

“...Is watching me something enjoyable?”
“Yes.”

Wrapped in sheets with just a slight degree of smile at the edge of her lips, Kato-san nodded at my query.

“It’s quite interesting. I’m thinking about how mysterious that is.”

Saying that, Kato-san picked up the round shield that I had made.
It is a black shield with a smooth surface.

“Even though the materials are just wood, looking like it’s made from metal and nothing else once it’s finished…”

Saying such, she stretched out and tapped her fingernails on the shield’s black surface.

It resounded with a dull *giiin* sound.
<TLN: Dull metallic sound -Blesser>

Most of my recent works change into this black-ish hue.
The change did not only affect their appearance; their properties became hard and sturdy.
Comparing them to the texture of the wood of origin, it is as if they are completely different.

However, how would that be considered ‘mysterious’, I wonder.
That was what I questioned.

The things I have made become magically imbued items.
As a Magical Puppet, I did not feel a single trace of strangeness about it because it is a monster’s characteristics.
From my point of view, I did not really understand what Kato-san was asking about.

“Mysterious, you say?”
“Yes. ...Eh? *This* isn’t something mysterious to you, Rose-san?”

Seeing me nod, Kato-san made a slightly troubled expression.

“Ah. That’s right. Unlike us, it’s not as if you’ve learnt the concepts of things like atoms from textbooks, huh… Come to think of it, didn’t Mizushima-senpai once say that a long time ago, the world used to think swallows or something burrowed themselves into sandy beaches to become clams?”
<TLN: The actual saying, perhaps originating from a Chinese proverb, is based off the Tang lunar calendar used in Japan during ~AD862-1685 when people said that sparrows (often confused for swallows) don’t appear in villages because they see them gather at the beach and when it becomes autumn they believed that they entered the sea and became clams. If you want to talk about this in more depth, contact us.) -Kiddosr>

Kato-san mumbles to herself.
And I, who has been responding to her questions while shaving wood primarily in silence.

Incidentally, Lily-anesama is recuperating a little further away from us and is not participating in this conversation. She was almost well enough to move around; however, our Master—who is prone to worrying—strictly ordered anesama to rest until she has fully recovered.

Due to this sequence of events, the job of being Kato-san's conversation partner has been entirely left to me.

"Magical tool creation."

Kato-san stroked the black shield with the tip of her finger.

"It might be a normal thing from Rose-san's point of view, but it's something amazing to me. Magic's amazing, isn't it."
"Although, this is me purely using magic power, and strictly speaking: not a spell."
"If this isn't a result of magic, then what's amazing is Rose-san's skill. After all, you're able to manufacture something to this extent**."**
"Thank you."
"I think Majima-senpai also thinks that way too."

As I reflexively looked up from my work, Kato-san expressed a slight smile.

"…"

It seems that she understands—extremely well—what makes me the happiest.

"Please let me know if there's anything I can help with, okay?"
"…"

I wonder, just how much does she know about me to say that…
While thinking thoughts like this, I held out the shield that I had just been adjusting the shape of to her.

"Well then, may I ask you to bring this to the discard pile?"
"Oh? This one's being thrown away too?"
"Idle thoughts of mine were coalesced within it, after all."

I hand Kato-san the shield that had just been carved into its overall shape.
I had the feeling that Kato-san slightly furrowed her eyebrows as she took it.

"Was I, perhaps, a bother?"
"No. This was because of a different matter."
"If so, then okay. ...I've been thinking this for a while now, but you're making quite a lot of failed products, huh, Rose-san."

Kato-san fixed her gaze on the small mountain of wood chips some distance away.

Those are all of the products that I had created and repeatedly thrown away throughout these past few days: failed products.

Even though there are plenty of materials in the surrounding area, considering the time that I spent on them, it feels a bit like that time was wasted.
However, I had no intention of making any compromise when it came to my *own* works.

“Everyone’s lives depend on the armaments I make. I will not allow myself to provide them with items that even have the slightest imperfection.”
“Ahh. I see. Rose-san is a craftsman, huh.”

Saying so with a friendly tone, Kato-san went to toss away my failed product.

In the meantime, I chose a new piece of wood and cut out the general outline.

Each piece of wood has its own peculiarities. In order to process them, those peculiarities have to be acutely understood. That fact does not change even for me, who infuses magical power into each item as the finishing touch.

When I touch them, their optimal shape naturally gets transmitted to me.

I modelled the block of wood in my hands into a long and narrow shape. The plan for it is for its final form to be a sword. At this point, its general image comes to my mind. What remains, is simply a matter of bringing the object closer to that image.

Kato-san returns as I am doing this, and sits in front of me once again.
She smiles slightly in satisfaction when she pulls the sheets towards her and puts it around her shoulders. Yesterday, when I asked her about it during a break in one of our idle chats, she said that being wrapped in sheets calms her down. However, 'It's something like when a baby holds their own blanket, they calm down', that simile is hard for someone like me—who never had an infantile period—to understand.

And like that, wrapped up in the sheets—as usual—was Kato-san, who abruptly opened her mouth.

“Was the reason of the failure Gerbera-san?”

A loud *snap* resounded, and the block of wood in my hands broke in two.

“…”

I paused, dumbfounded for a short while.

Time moved again for me when Kato-san apologetically bowed her head.

“Sorry. This time for sure, I was a bother to you.”
“...No.”

Even though Kato-san was the cause, the one who made the mistake—was me.
I shook my head and set aside the now-unusable wood.

I pick up a new piece of wood. As I shaved it, I asked: .

“Why do you think that it is related to Gerbera?”
“I’m sorry. I overheard your talk with Majima-senpai earlier.”

Then that would be... the discussion on the morning, three days ago?
When I had brought my distrust of Gerbera to Master’s attention.

It appears she had overheard that.
If so, there is probably little point to try and hide it now.

“It is as Kato-san says.”
The true reason the ‘idle thoughts’ that have been interfering with my duty, was Gerbera.

No matter what, I still felt uneasy about *that* Gerbera.

Master has forgiven her.
If I acknowledge myself as a part of his Family, then I also should forgive Gerbera as well.
In my mind, I understand this.
However, my emotions refuse to follow suit no matter what.

I am Master’s shield.
I wish to bear any and all disasters in his stead with this manufactured body of mine.
Even if my body was reduced to ruins as a result of that, I would not care in the slightest.

For me, who was resolutely determined to do that, the incident of that night when I could not protect Master was much too painful of a memory.

That night. The despair I felt when Master was stolen away.
The rage I felt upon seeing Master injured after finally arriving at the Arachne’s nest.
Like a banked fire, both of the emotions still lingers inside of me, causing an unpleasant heat within.

Even just with that alone, it is extremely difficult for me to forgive her.

Moreover, the fact that I completely could not understand Gerbera's reason for resorting to that sort of violence… On this point, you could even say that this is something 'vital' to the both of us.

"I desire to make Milord mine alone."

Gerbera's natural impulses were the cause for her rampage.
The desire to be the sole possessor of something important to you, is perhaps, more or less something anyone can embrace.

However, for me, those types of emotions can be said to be practically non-existent.

This has already surpassed the issue of who is in the right or wrong.

What is certain is, due to the differences in our innate dispositions, I am unable to understand her.

To forgive someone without understanding them is a hard thing to do.
That is what I meant by it being 'vital'.

Even I have the desire to accept the fact that Master has forgiven her.
...I want to, but no matter how hard I try, that ends up becoming the bottleneck.
I cannot help but feel that I am unable to accept her.

Even though I understand in my mind that Master does not wish for that…

"…I am thoroughly ashamed."

I am not heeding Master's will.
As a monster of Master's Family, one should feel shame.

"I don't think there's a need to be ashamed, though."

However, Kato-san shook her head at the one who said those words: me.

"Rose-san has a tendency to suppress herself too much, huh."
"I suppress myself too much, you say?"
"I understand Rose-san's attitude of putting Majima-senpai first, and I think that trying to respect others is a virtue, but… if you overdo it, then you'll end up losing what it means to be yourself."
"Is that bad?"

Kato-san's point didn't get through to me at all.

"Master decided to take in Gerbera, and forgave her. In that case, I should abide by his will. This is because we exist to fulfill Master's wishes. For that reason, does not something like my will not matter?"
"I thought Rose-san would say something like that, though…"

Kato-san's tone was tinged with something akin to a bitter smile.

"But, even though you say that, isn't suppressing yourself something that would make Majima-senpai unhappy?"
"…"

It was hard to refute her point.
Master values us 'Monsters of the Family' deeply.

So much so, it seems like he is prone to value us over himself.

"In that case, what do you think is best thing to do regarding the matter concerning Gerbera?"

This time, I asked Kato-san.

Presently, I do not know what to do with myself.
I do not know how I should interact with Gerbera.
Therefore, this chance—to be able to ask Kato-san—was certainly not a bad opportunity for me.

The image of Kato-san on that night, who appeared on the battlefield by herself without so much as a knife in hand, remained vivid in my mind.
She is much more well-versed than us in matters regarding the human heart.
If it's her, she might be able to find a solution to this standstill in my heart.

The name of the girl who gave me such hope was a girl called Kato Mana.

"Wouldn't it be alright for Rose-san to forgive her when Rose-san thinks that she is able to?"

After pausing for a brief moment, Kato-san opened her mouth.

"It's not okay to suppress your emotions. That's not something Majima-senpai wishes for, and something will surely become warped."
"Warped?"

“For example, if you stifled your emotions towards Gerbera, it can also be seen as taking away her chance to atone from her. If it turns out that way, then no matter how much time passes, you will never be able to accept her.”

“…There is that viewpoint too.”

Kato-san’s opinion was of great interest to me.
Before I was aware of it, I had already stopped working and faced Kato-san.

The conversation was simply that important.

“The rest depends on both your efforts, I guess. As for Gerbera… Well, I trust that senpai will somehow do something about it…”

Kato-san looked as if she were staring off into the distance.

A gloomy stare. However, the look was a reliable one.
The world she sees is surely different from the one I do…

“Rose-san, you do want to accept Gerbera-san, right?”
“Yes. Of course. However, I am not inclined to forgive her at all.”
“Is that so…That’s right, huh. In a sense, that’s probably to be expected.”

‘To be expected’...
That was how Kato-san expressed my current state.

“It’s because Rose-san isn’t greedy.”
“Greedy…?”

“Though, if you say it that way, it has a negative impression.”

Kato-san slightly laughed.

“But, for example, even Majima-senpai thinks, ‘I want the people who love me to be around me.’ Senpai’s wish, ‘to love those people and sincerely respond to them,’ is something that you as his Family know best, don’t you? Even this, is a form of greed. I think that’s a very senpai-like thought.”
“...Greed.”
“If calling it ‘greed’ is hard to accept, then you can also call it ‘desire’. It’s an unimportant difference in rhetoric, after all. The important part is that’s what his so-called ‘human-ness’ is. That’s probably the same for Lily-san and Gerbera-san, too.”

Desire. Is it, for example, in Lily-anesama's case: to want to be loved by Master?
Or perhaps, in Gerbera's case: to wish to be accepted by the other members in the Family as a fellow comrade? Could *those* be called desires?

"It seems to me that Rose-san's desires are partial. 'Wanting to do something', 'Wanting something to be done', and 'Wanting to do something for someone'. …Desires have many different forms, however it looks like you are terribly inclined to the last one."

In other words, does that mean my personality is a 'defective product'?
"That's not it."

Kato-san denied my question with a vehement tone.

"'Partial' just means that it's undeveloped. Even if that's wrong, it's definitely not defective."
"To declare that statement so definitively…"
"I can. I can say so. I mean, from when you obtained a heart until now, haven't only a few months passed? For the heart to be undeveloped, isn't it to be expected?"

After having that pointed out to me, I felt as if I had been taken unawares.
That is certainly correct.

I had two moments of birth.
First, when I was created as a Magical Puppet, and then again when I was born as the individual, named Rose.

However, if I was to say which one constitutes my 'birth', I would certainly say the latter.

The life of a puppet with no purpose—no matter how many sheets are layered on top of it—is nothing but a flimsy bundle of paper.
Compared to that, the act of gaining a Master to serve, and spending every day serving him—what a brilliant thing that is.

For a Magical Puppet such as I, there is no infantile period.
Yet, emotionally speaking, the present me is something akin to a newborn infant.

My feelings are undeveloped, immature.
In the first place, that Gerbera cannot compare to Lily-anesama who holds the memories of Mizushima Miho.

I want to exist for the sake of Master. I want to labor for him. If it's for him, I want to do *anything and everything.* That alone has been 'my everything', and is probably what being 'undeveloped' refers to.

For this reason, wanting Master… in other words, Gerbera's rampage—that stemmed from the urge of 'Wanting to do something'—is something that I cannot understand.

Possibly, this is the reason why I do not understand the inner workings of the human heart after all.

"However—in the first place—I wonder if I have something of those desires and the like?"

If that is one manifestation of 'human-ness', then I would not think it strange even if a puppet such as myself were not endowed with such complete emotions.

However, Kato-san shook her head, and disagreed with these worries of mine.

"You do. I'm sure that what Majima-senpai wishes for is not a convenient puppet. It should be a person with resolute character. That's also exactly why Gerbera-san and your relations is now becoming complicated like this . If that's the case, it's impossible that you don't have any of your own wishes."
"However, I can not think of any at all."

Possibly because she understood that I was greatly perplexed, Kato-san showed a thoughtful expression.

She pondered for a short while.
Before long the wrinkle in her brow disappeared.

"Up until this moment, Rose-san, have you ever thought 'Ah, I feel happy'?"

I tilted my head at Kato-san's question.

"Happy, you say?"
"Yes."

Kato-san nodded.

"Wanting to experience that happiness once again. If you can think that way, then can't you call that your wish?"
"I see."

After receiving an easy-to-understand suggestion, I paused to think for a bit.

Happiness.

Happiness, huh.
Devoting myself for Master's sake *right now*, is my very happiness, however…

“I meant something aside from working for Senpai’s sake or being useful to him.”

Kato-san hit the head on the nail. Well, I understand what she is saying.
My own wish—something that I have to find—has to be a desire like ‘Wanting to do something,’ or ‘Wanting something to be done.’. Because of it, I will find a part of myself that even I myself have not known until now, and be able to grow.

Hap-pi-ness.

“...”

When that word came to mind, something suddenly flitted across my mind.

——...Rather, I became so happy that it scares me."

“Rose-san?”

It was the memory in my life which could be said to be the most precious.

“Did you think of something?”
“Ah, no. Um… This is, different.”

I automatically answered Kato-san’s question with a negative, after she asked upon noticing my slight change in behavior.
Rather than having dodged the question, it was an outright lie.

After all, ‘this’ can’t be it.
No matter the circumstances, ‘this’ can’t be forgiven.

Certainly, Kato-san had asked me about my memories of happiness that I experienced throughout my short lifespan.
If speaking on that point, ‘this’ is perfect. It is my happiest memory, and complies perfectly with her stated conditions.

However, to wish for that “once more”...
This is not even at the level of aiming too high. This is what ‘being too presumptuous’ truly is.

There is no way I could wish that.
There is no way I could desire that.

I am just a puppet, after all.

“Rose-san, you’re lying aren’t you.”

Kato-san cut down my excuses bluntly.
From her point of view, my inept excuses were probably obvious.

“If Rose-san has thought about ‘wanting to do something’, then you have already thought quite seriously about it, haven’t you?”

It was the lack of leniency that made me vividly remember the time of that other night when she was driving Lily-anesama into a corner.

There is *only* one small difference.
That night she was like that for Master’s sake.
And today, she is like that for my sake.

She can probably see through me with her characteristically sharp senses.
That—for me—this is a rite of passage that I definitely need…

Her conviction-laden remarks have also supported me.
However, the deciding factor was something else after all.

I became conscious of my own desires.
I could not return to when I did not not know them.
The fact that, even if only in passing, I had involuntarily thought of complying the wishes I had become aware of.
As far as I am concerned, that in itself, was conclusive.

“I—…”

Mustering up my courage, I decisively put those thoughts into words.

“I want to…”

I put them completely into words.

“I want… to embrace Master…”

Sure enough… I regretted trying to put them into words.

I want to be embraced by Master.

What… what is with that.
What are you trying to say.
There are things you can and can't say, you know?

Certainly, I have been embraced by Master once.
On the day Master's so-called school friend—a cowardly youth—had the tables turned on him.

That night, when I also returned Master's embrace, I had nestled up closely to his sleeping form through the whole night.

To me—who does not sleep—that was truly a one-night dream.

Of course, that is an exceptional occurrence.
Even I am very aware of that.

Dreams only occur in dreams.
To seriously wish for such a dream, is something only a fool does.
Know your place.
You are just a puppet.

...Even if I tell myself that, my heart was not able to lie.

I ended up earnestly wishing for Master to embrace me…

"...Aww, jeez! Rose-san, you're so cute!"

Suddenly, I was embraced from the front.
By Kato-san.

I, who became stiff, returned to my senses and timidly pushed her away by the shoulders.

"My apologies. Kato-san. Might I ask of you to distance yourself?"
"Ah, I'm sorry. I just, unintentionally..."

Kato-san lightly stepped back and lowered her eyebrows as if she was embarrassed.
The sight of her doing this reminded me somewhat of Lily-anesama. …No, that's not right.
This probably resembles Mizushima Miho, whom anesama is mimicking.
The figure of an absolutely normal, everyday-occurring girl.
If that was the case, this may be how the girl named Kato Mana naturally is originally.

“The one Rose wants to be embrace is not me, but Majima-senpai after all.”
“Um, yes. I mean, no. But—”
“What is it?”
“Is it not presumptuous for a puppet such as myself to think of being embraced by Master?”
“That’s not true.”

Kato-san took on a reproachful tone of voice.
“Saying something like that, are you going to give up, just like that?”
“No. Troubling Master with this selfishness of mine is…”
“I’m sure that Majima-senpai would be happy if you spoke of your desires.”
“Even though I am being selfish?”
“From what I can see, personality-wise, I think that when Senpai is the type to feel apologetic instead when he is the only one being served by others.”
“That’s…”

…‘That’s entirely likely’—is what I thought.
Even though it is a given that I serve Master, he sometimes is not agreeable with it.
If that’s the case, I wondered if this selfishness of mine is of Master’s agreeability?

Ahh, but still.
Not good. Not good. This is the whisper of the devil.

“You can’t give up.”

So Kato-san says.
Rather than calling it the whispers of the devil, her tone of voice was more akin to the gentle nudges of an affectionate mother.

“You don’t want to trouble Senpai. In that case, if Senpai himself wanted to give you a hug, wouldn’t that solve the problem?”
“You say it solves the problem… However, wouldn’t that be an unlikely situation?”

One could say the events of that one night was such a situation.
I could not see it ever happening again.

“I’m telling you, you can’t give up!.”

Her firm grip on my hand tightened.

“Let’s put some effort into realizing your wish… After all, your wish is something that can come true.”

“What are you telling me to do?”
“That’s easy.”

Kato-san looked at me intently.

“All you have to do is make yourself cute enough that Majima-senpai will want to embrace you.”
“Making me… cute?”

“That’s right. Fortunately, you have enough skill to make tools, right? Even without a witch, a tree that is a keepsake of your mother, or a special stage performance equipment, you should be able to use the special magic for making yourself out to be cute .”
<TLN: Yeah this is referencing various versions of Cinderella, whereby the witch is the fairy godmother (Cendrillon by Charles Perrault) and the mother’s keepsake is the hazel tree (Aschenputtel by the Brothers Grimm) and the stage performance device is the equivalent of the gowns/slippers/shoes/etc. in most versions. -Kiddosr>

Kato-san’s proposal was certainly not impossible.
I am a Magical Puppet. A monster who possesses a magical knife.

Creation, to me, is practically equivalent to the meaning of life.
I should even be able to create myself anew once more.

However, it is not simply a question of whether or not I am able to physically do so.

“However, would a mere doll such as myself be permitted to perform such actions?”
“*Of course* it’s allowed.”

Kato-san affirmed me.
Her tone was probably the strongest it had been today.

“You know, Rose-san. When a girl wants a boy to embrace her, it’s normal for her to try to become cuter. Things like putting on makeup, improving oneself… To a girl, actions like this are really important. Even Senpai has no right to find fault with that.”
“However, I am a doll.”
“What are you talking about. Just think about it. Don’t you think it’s natural for dolls to get dressed up and be embraced by their masters? Whether you’re a girl, a doll, either way, there isn’t even a single reason for anyone to get in your way of becoming pretty for Senpai. After all, Rose-san, you are a *female* doll.”

Kato-san repeated—”You can’t give up”—again.

I wavered as I felt her earnest stare.

"Is it even okay to do that?"—The reproach of someone that is one of the Monster of the Family.
“Is there even a point in doing that?”—The voice of rationality.

Every single possible thing began binding me hand and foot.

I placed them all on one side of the scale, and my wish on the other.

I wondered which way the scale will tilt.
As I watched the results settle… I suddenly realized I was doing something very foolish.
After all, the moment I put them on the scale like that, the weight that my wishes held to me was apparent.

There’s no reason to it.
This emotion—it’s unreasonable and irrational.
Ahh, I see.
This is what ‘Wanting do something’ is, isn’t it?.

At that time, I may have finally come to understand a portion of what was called ‘the human heart’.

“For example, if I were to dress up to my utmost extent——”

I finally asked.
Thinking about it afterwards, I’m sure I wanted the encouragement.

“——would Master be happy?”
“I’m sure he would.”

Kato-san gave her blessings to my decision with a smile.

Those words contained no falsities, and the phrase of encouragement is filled with affection.
The current me was certainly able to clearly feel that.

It was truly something to be thankful for.

Were it not for her, this wish of mine—that I had completely left locked in the warehouse within my heart—would probably have been forever left alone until it had ended up growing old and rusted.
If I were to remain unable to even recognise the important things as important, then I suppose I would have eventually died in obscurity.

Now, I feel as though I could even come to forgive Gerbera someday.
The things that she had done were aggravating, and yet, the feeling of labelling her motives that caused them as incomprehensible and throwing them aside had weakened.

It may not be possible right now, but someday. It should not be too far off. Surely…

“Of course, I’ll help out too. In order for you to become cuter, I’ll back you up all the way.”
“Thank you.”

At that moment, I had crossed the so-called border between a Monster of the Family and a human; I held feelings of gratitude towards that girl, as an individual.

“Kato-san, are…”

That’s precisely why I asked.

“…Are you not angry with us?”
“Angry?”

Kato-san stared wide-eyed in surprise.

“Me? At you? Wait, what? *Why*?”
“Ever since Master decided to shelter you, we have always been on guard against you. We have been viewing you as an internal threat. You were already aware of this, weren’t you?”
“Yes. Lily-san had mentioned that directly to my face previously as well.”

It was an incident right before the battle to the death with Gerbera.
As if truly unbothered by it, Kato-san spoke in a tone-of-voice no different than when she spoke of normal, everyday occurrences.

“Besides, it was also said at that time, but it’s because I’ve also noticed it from before.”
“In that case, is it not normal for you to direct your anger towards me? At least, that man named Kaga, before being slain by Master, had been consumed with rage.”

Besides Master and Kato-san right in front of me, the only other figure of a human, male whom I had ever spoken with, specially came to mind… However, the features of his face soon became vague.

“Still, being put in the same lump as him is… kinda unpleasant, though.”

Perhaps it was thoroughly unpleasant, the ridge between Kato-san's slender eyebrows wrinkled slightly.

"I apologize."

I lowered my head.

"However, I do not think I am necessarily off the mark. Normally when you are kept in the dark, people would consider it unpleasant. It would not be strange for you to bear ill will towards us."

After having received this much help, I could not put this question aside.
In any case, it also seems that Kato-san had—in order to resolve my worries—made time for me and talked to me like she is doing now.

Kato-san nodded at my point.

"Let's see. From my perspective, I don't think there's any helping that you guys doubt me, but even so, I'd probably normally become somewhat displeased, you know."
"Then…"
"But, I'm not particularly angry."

Those were baffling words.
Kato-san saying that she would normally be angered by it, yet said that she was not particularly upset.

Kato-san sensed that I had not understood, and tilted her head.

"…Mmm. Let's see."

Kato-san—between the sheets—took the completed buckler she had been looking at until a while ago once more, held it to her chest, put her finger on her lip and showed a thinking posture.

"Putting it in other words, I think I'm feeling empathy for the Family."
"Empathy…? Not for Master, who is a human, but for us who are of the Family?"
"Yes. For you guys."

What—Kato-san who would say those words—had to say was, admittedly something convincing, except for one point.
Precisely because she is empathizing with us, to show that she understood that standpoint, she does not harbour any anger.

That I understand. I understand that much.

However, *why* she turned out to harbour empathy in the first place, is something that I do not understand.

We are monsters of Master's Family.
Serving Master is our reason for our existence. After having learned of my own hidden desires—the truth within me, it was—and still is—unchanging, even now.

Even though she empathises with us, who are like that, I wonder if it is there in Kato-san, who is a human.

"Besides."

Kato-san continued.
"Grateful…?"
"After all, you're talking to me normally, without particularly distrusting me, aren't you? The only one that does that is you, Rose-san."
"You can tell?"

When I asked in surprise, Kato-san put on a slightly bitter smile.

"Like this, you're listening to me talk, and even on that night, you were the one who was the first to declare your intention of taking me together with you,weren't you? Besides, I know that Rose-san has a straight-forward personality.
You're not the type that can express yourself well without expressions; if you were suspicious, it would have immediately been shown on your face."
"But my face is expressionless…"
"Yes. That's because that part is just a joke."
"..."
<TLN: The cold wind blows~ -Blesser>

I don't know how serious she is, but I see, I may certainly be easy to understand.

I am aware of this, however amongst the party—Master included—I am likely the dullest.

When you say 'serious' and 'honest', it *sounds* nice, however in actuality, I am thinking that it is probably correct to call myself honest to a fault and inflexible. I guess Gerbera's case is a good example of that.

For argument's sake, even if I was suspecting Kato-san, it probably would have been immediately communicated to her.
I see. Kato-san's point makes sense.

Unlike Master or Lily-anesama, I am certainly not doing things like distrusting her.

'Won't she betray us?', for example.
'What is she thinking?', for example.

I am not thinking such things.
Perhaps it may be more apt to say that I do not understand the reason for distrusting her.

To be honest, I do not have a good impression concerning the beings called 'humans' that hurt Master. That's why—even with Kato-san—I was not very fond of her in the beginning. However, after spending time with her, her standing in my eyes gradually changed.

I am probably different from Lily-anesama regarding these matters.
From the start, there was a certain level of affinity between me—who was given the role to ensure the safety of a 'Master with no fighting prowess'—and the 'girl with no fighting prowess'. Also—unlike Lily-anesama, who holds the memories of Mizushima Miho—after gaining my ego, of the other people who I had spent a long period of time with, Kato-san's portion was large.

For these reasons, even on the night when we were attacked by the White Arachne, I had no hesitation in bringing Kato-san along.
On top of that, Kato-san put her life on the line and acted for the sake of Master.

By now, there is no reason to doubt her.

Rather…
However, this is something that I don't really want to think about, and I would never plan on putting it into words…

To my eyes, the depth of Master's suspicion towards Kato-san had seemed to be somewhat strange.

Rather than 'strange', if I was to be blunt, I had even thought it was 'abnormal'.

Even so, the reason why Master has become like that was clear enough that even I—a puppet doll—could guess.
The large wound carved on Master's heart.
The pain that continues to torment him.

It was likely that as long as the pain doesn't heal, Master would not be able to accept Kato-san.

"I'm really grateful to Rose-san, who believes in me."

And as a result, I became concerned about Kato-san, who had been placed into a lonely environment since.

"I'm grateful to the extent that I want to become friends, if it's possible."

Therefore when I was told such a thing, I accepted it with surprise.

"To be friends…?"
"It's difficult, isn't it? As I thought…"

I immediately thought that it *would* be difficult.
We are indebted to her. Master is as well, and even I myself, have been imposing on her today.

I must return that favor.

However, I am a Monster of the Family, and she is a human.
Our standings are different. Where we stand is different. Our values are different. And above all, our races are different.
Anything and everything is different: to the point of it being hopeless.
It is the act of 'becoming friends', that is why it is difficult.

No, but...
That is not what is important, right?

"...As I thought, it's hopeless isn't it?"

Kato-san had the air of 'I just wanted to try saying it', and putting on a weak smile, as if saying 'that was a joke just now'. She is making the shape of smile without any feelings behind it.

When I looked at her face, that had such a fleeting smile, I felt my heart clenching tightly.
It is an incomprehensible emotion, but one rampaging inside of me.

If it was like I have been doing until now, I probably would've immediately suppressed such impulsive emotions as something useless.

However, the current me knew what exactly those emotions were.
They were the ones I had become acquainted with just a moment ago.
The ones I was just taught about.
I had been able to accurately discern that they are something important.

Pushed by an impulse, I began to speak to her sad smile before I realized it.

“If Master gives the order, I would point my blade towards you.”
“What?”

Kato-san’s eyes widened and her face revealed a shocked expression.
Of course she would be surprised. Even I am surprised by my own words.

Eventually, Kato-san raised her head as though mystified.

“Why are you suddenly talking about something that obvious?”

Does she think that this is something obvious?
Despite this, she said ‘I want to become friends’, huh?

That mentality is not something that my present self is able to even guess at.
For me, I am not able to grasp even a fragment of what’s inside Kato Mana’s mind.

However, one thing was very clear, even for someone like me.
Her previous words——her hope of ‘I want to become friends’ that she had verbalised——were serious.

If that’s the case, I’ll also sincerely respond to that.
Fortunately, my feeling of ‘Wanting to do something’, is something I am learning from none other than her. Instead of the rational ‘what should I do’, I was pushed by the urge of ‘what I want to do’, and answered her.

“Despite that, if you are saying it is okay with you, then….”
“Yes”
“I… I also, think I would like to be your friend.”
“... Eh?”

Kato-san opened her eyes widely.

As if she hadn’t heard clearly.
On those facial features of hers that were child-like for her age, a look of understanding slowly spread.

“Ah.”

For only a moment, her face strained as if to cry.

“…Thank you, Rose-san.”

With astounding force of will, Kato-san composed herself.
However, as if unable to hold back, a smile was engraved on her mouth.

Just that, convinced me that my decision was not wrong.

“Well then, please treat me kindly, Rose-san.”

Kato-san held out her hand.
It was similar to, yet clearly a different scenery as the night we joined strengths to stand against Gerbera.

“Hah, it feels kinda late though.”
“No. I believe this is necessary.”

I let go of the knife in my hand, and grasped Kato-san’s extended hand.

“Please treat me kindly as well, Kato-san.”

This event marked the first day Mana and I became friends.

Author’s Notes

◆ The events within the Arachne’s nest during the Master’s absence. It’s Rose’s turn.
At the same time, it’s Kato-san’s turn as well.

◆ The next update will be on 2/15 (Saturday).

Master of Monsters Vol 2 Chapter 5

By
Cyrogen

8th November
2015

Sorry this took so long to finish. I had problems last week and lost most of my work.
A hard lesson has been learnt and I'll make sure not to repeat that mistake.

As for this week I plan to get two chapters of TnK done before starting the next MoM chapter. Hopefully I'll have an MoM chapter for next weekend but it might take me longer as MoM is quite long.

Also a big thanks to Echo who edited this chapter for me. I hope you all enjoy it.

05. Signs of Ominous Clouds
Outline of the previous story:
A lonely girl made a friend.
"GURUUAAA!"

The Fire Fang snarls, bounding through the deep forest.
It weaves between the trees as it runs, crushing shrubs as it tries to go around behind us.

It is so fast that I can barely follow it with my eyes.
However it was not as agile as the white spider.

"GURUUA!?"

It cries out in fright
A white figure stands in the way of the wolf

"Thou shalt not pass"

In an instant, the white spider that should have been next to me stood in front of the wolf and laughed with a girlish smile
and with a single blow.

"Fuun"
"GYAUN!?"

The white spider or rather Gerbera hit the snout of the Fire Fang barehanded.
Even simply pushing out her hand with pure strength was enough to cause a fatal wound.
A few fangs broke off and the giant wolf over 2 metres in length was blown off in the opposite direction.

As expected of a monster, even though the bones in its neck appear to be broken, the Fire Fang stood up with a dripping nosebleed.

"Rrrrrr…!"

It let out a restrained groan and turned around.
The Fire Fang realized it was at a disadvantage and turns tail to run away.

Of course, there's no reason to let it go quietly.

“M’lord!”

Gerbera returns to me quickly and hands me the large shield. I put it on my back as usual when moving around. And then she lifted me up with her slender arms.

Up to this point, it was the usual routine.

All of Gerbera’s movements were quick and precise. So much that I was fascinated.
After all she is a god-sent child who shines in battle.

…The previous everyday feelings of misfortune feel like a lie.
Well, it wasn’t all bad, there were some lovely points in them.

“Take care to not bite thy tongue”

“I wish you’d have said that when I met you.”
“…Thee promised not to speak of that.”

Gerbera gave my poor joke a dirty look, but I want her to forgive this much.

Anyway, at present I’m being held in the so called ‘Princess carry’.

I feel so pathetic that I could cry.

I would have rather been piggy backed, but she rejected it because there is a problem with safety when running through the forest.

“Here we go.”
She called out to me and then began to run like an arrow released from a bow.

The trees of the forest drift by rapidly.
The speed is unbelievable. Though if it were present day Japan I’d be accustomed to it from riding in cars, this is a forest with many obstacles. I believe if I were to run at the same speed I would definitely hit a tree before I even travel 5 metres. Our reflexes are undoubtedly different.

Furthermore I figured out that she is being considerate of the vibrations as she carries me.
If I was to ride on Gerbera’s back that would be impossible to do. The only way was to hold me in her arms.

As she runs, my eyes gradually got used to it.
I confirm the back of the fleeing Fire Fang. It also ran through the forest at a tremendous speed.

But Gerbera was even faster.
We continue keeping a constant distance without reaching it or losing it. For the one being pursued it was unbearable.

We encountered the Fire Fang while Gerbera was guiding me to the nearby water source.

It attacked and we countered, leading to now.

This Fire Fang appears to have come alone to the spring for a drink of water. However this type of monster usually travels in a pack.
In this area there are leftover strays caused by the scouting group. This kind of situation is unusual. Normally they would move in a group.

Consequently.

“UOOOOOOOON!”

Is that a howl or a scream?
A few seconds after the wounded Fire Fang’s howl, the howls of wolves responded from various directions.

“The strategy was a success.”
“Indeed”

When I muttered Gerbera nodded.

“I’d say it was from five or six places.”

Wolves jumped out of the forest from both the left and right as I finished speaking.

“GURUUAAA!”

Red flames spew from the wolf’s mouth and licks the forest, scorching the towering trees and incinerating a shrub in an instant.

Gerbera jumps up to avoid being injured by the flame and lands onto one of the trees.

“GU…!”

There is a rustling sound as I brush through the leaves. It is painful, but I grit my teeth without complaining.

Gerbera relocates to another tree immediately. The tree we were on a moment ago was surrounded by several streaks of flame and flared up like a candle.
“I give my utmost apology, there doth not appear to beast that is worthy enough of being a fellow mistress.”

At Gerbera’s words I also look down at the figures of the six wolves which look up at us and howl.
I also confirm it and nod.

“Looks that way.”
“Very well, then there is no reason to hesitate.”

Thread flies from Gerbera’s hand.
Half of them manage to evade this, but the remainder are caught without being able to successfully escape. Gerbera easily fished up the three wolves, and releases them…without hesitation she bashes them head first into the ground.

“I guess it’s over.”

It did not take Gerbera long to annihilate the wolves.

＊ ＊ ＊

After everything had ended we held a strategy meeting.

By the way, even though we killed six Fire Fangs, because it is difficult to take everything back, after we appropriately dismantled them, the majority will be left behind.
Although the entire pelt we skinned from the boss is good, the rest aren’t pretty.

“Firstly, was this a success?”

Gerbera nods to my words.

“Tis so. However, not finding any familiars is an issue.”

“That cannot be helped. To begin with I’m pleased that instead of the trial and error which took us three days before only took us less than half a day this way.”

We went and searched the area around the spring Gerbera told me about.。
As Gerbera had said, a lot of monsters definitely appeared in the vicinity and we encountered three monsters in succession.

The last one was the Fire Fang just now.

It’s most efficient to look for groups of monsters to meet as many as possible. With the combat prowess of the white Arachne there is no trouble routing enemies.
Though it is quickest to encounter a group from the beginning, just like a little while ago sometimes they may move independently.
Monsters 『Don’t have individual will.』However the world we are in there is『Intelligence at the level of wild animals.』

In that case, if I wait for it to call its companions I can search more efficiently.

Those were the details of the battle a little while ago.
The strategy I came up with beforehand played out splendidly and I was able to encounter eight monsters in only a few hours.

“If we don’t return soon the sun will set.”

“Indeed.”

It was not a bad situation.
On the other hand, there was not much time left.
Lily recovers steadily and Rose will replace the lost equipment.

I need to speed things up…
While heading home, I focused on thinking of ideas.

＊ ＊ ＊

When we returned to Arachne’s nest, I was met by Lily whose whole face was smiling.

“Welcome back, master!”

She says so while embracing my arm without any visible fatigue.

“I’m back…Are you alright not lying down?”
“I’m already fine. I only got up a few minutes ago. Also, welcome home Gerbera.”
“I-indeed. I has’t returned.”

That reminds me, this is the first time in several days that Lily has embraced my arm this way.
Is it possible that because she had stored pent-up desire that she seems so happy now?
I’m glad that I can touch her while she is happy like this.
This is slightly embarrassing and at the same time I’m happy.

This is because it’s obvious that Lily who has become healthy can join us in our search.
However, searching with only Gerbera and I was a little more convenient. What should I do?
。
I receive a dinner full of love that was prepared by Lily while I think about of how to persuade her.

Because Lily has recovered this is the first time all the members assemble since the night of that fierce battle.
The meal is the usual meat of the Fire Fang. As I thought, it's still disgusting. Unfortunately, even Lily's love cannot overturn the failure of the material.
I remember the burgers that I previously ate in Japan; they were artificially made with cheap meat. I never realized how blessed I was…until I arrived here.
"I will go with you tomorrow."
"I suggest you rest for another day at least."
"But"
"Even when I recovered I was careful for a day."

When I persuaded her, Lily looked dissatisfied.
I pretended not to notice her expression and continued eating.

It is a poor way of buying time. Quite frankly my expectations are low on whether or not I will see any results in just one day. However, the chance was better than nothing.

"That's right. That reminds me I needed to speak with you."

I changed the topic a little forcibly to cut off any arguments from Lily.

Besides it was true that I needed to talk to her. There was something I understood as a result of having the opportunity to speak with Gerbera at the spring in the beginning of the day.
。
It was something regarding that spring I intended to talk about–or not.
I just decided to have the conversion that I had with Gerbera from several hours ago regarding『Not putting a burden on Lily』and『Not being able to talk to Rose』.

However, it's not like it was necessary to hide the existence of the spring.
……However, since Gerbera talks poorly, she might make a careless remark about a careless place, in order to hide this I change the topic.
"Gerbera tells me that she is able to escape from this forest."
"Gerbera did?"

When Lily turned her eyes, Gerbera nodded with a firm expression.
There is still a bad atmosphere between them.
Although Lily's posture is nature, Gerbera seemed to feel indebted one-sidedly.
It was Lily who was forced to recuperate until today because she received the most damage amongst us on the day we fought. So it might be something inevitable.

I interrupted in order to follow up.

"Has Gerbera been to the edge of the forest before?"
"A-Aye"

Gerbera nods and begins to speak with difficulty.

"Lily and Rose wouldn't know of it because twas long ago, but there was many times when humans came into the forest in most wondrous numbers, it hath occurred three times in this one's lifetime. Apart from mine lord, those art the only times this one hath encountered humans. "
"Ah."

At that moment Lily uttered a cry as she had noticed something.

“There were other humans who transferred to this world with master, weren’t there?”

I was having the same thought as Lily shared her thoughts.

We have not met with any human beings from this other world.
It is because we transferred so deep within the forest and because Gerbera has only seen humans three other times in her long lifetime, it was unlikely that Lily had ever seen a human before.

“Once we found that cabin, I had the thought that there are probably other people.”
“Hmm, I see. That reminds me there was that.”

The cabin where we came across Kato at now ruined.

I thought there were humans in this world when I found that.
However there was the possibility that the world I transferred to was dominated by monkeys or the worst case scenario of it being ruled by slugs that stand upright. Since there were monsters it was a serious concern that I could never laugh off.

Hearing that Gerbera had witnessed human beings was a valuable piece of information for me.
Gerbera continues telling an old story.

“Naturally, if many human beings enter the forest, signs of it will arise. We monsters should notice it. They closed in like surging waves. In those days I wast on mine own. Chasing after a human who escaped, I noticed I had driven it to the edge of the forest.”
“I think Gerbera probably fought against a human army.”

According to Gerbera’s story the group were identically equipped. However they had already fallen into chaos when Gerbera arrived and the army was at a disadvantage.
Armor which protects the upper body, a helmet, a sword and shield in each hand…From what I’ve heard I wonder if it is possibly soldiers belonging to some country of this world? It doesn’t seem like she saw any kind of firearms.
I think the reason the main weapon was a sword rather than a spear is to cut down obstacles in the forest.

“It seems that the most direct path out of the forest is to go straight north from here.”
“For now it’s rejected just in case because it’s from long ago. There is also a possibility that the boundary of the forest is different now.”

“Nevertheless, isn’t this far more progress than when we understood nothing!”

Lily claps her hands together and smiles at Gerbera with a laugh.
As I thought, she does not seem to have anything against Gerbera either. Rather her smile is not affected by Gerbera in anyway, it seemed to show her compromising attitude clearly.
In my current state where I was over thinking things, seeing her act this way has relieved some of my anxiety.

“Huh?”

Lily’s eyes became round as she realized something.

“But…If I am not mistaken wasn’t 『East』 the direction that the first expedition headed?”
“Yes. It seems the first expedition didn’t have any luck.”

We who followed them cannot be called lucky either.
Of course, they may have noticed along the way and changed course. In that case, they would have left information for Kato and Miho Mizushima’s childhood friend Jun Takaya who were in pursuit of the first expedition corps, but they never caught up.

“Although we would pass through the forest eventually even if we go east.”

Even this forest couldn’t possibly spread out for ever. Actually the forest seems to come to an end on the north side.

“Well then, are we going north from here on?”
“…That is, to tell you the truth, I’m a little hesitant.”

If I go east it’s possible that I may eventually join the first expedition.
This is the best option for Kato’s protection. On the other hand, getting out of the forest will take longer.

I must leave this forest sometime soon. It’s because the living environment in this forest is too bad for me. The safety situation has considerably improved now that Gerbera has joined us, but for example the food problem doesn’t become better with more physical strength.
Surely I should leave the forest now. There is also the possibility of finding a human village in the future. Rather, the chances are quite good. If there is an army, there might also be a nation, because an army can’t be organized without a society.
If I visit a village I can obtain necessary supplies.
The problem is whether or not I can find a safe place for Kato but…

“…Well, it’s not necessary to make a decision immediately.”

I concluded as such. I could make a mistake if I rush. It isn’t necessary to decide right now either. I should only act after carefully thinking about it.

“Speaking of which.”

The one who interrupted was Kato who had been listening to our conversation.

“—!”

When I heard her voice, I stopped my hand which was grabbing a skewer of Fire Fang meat unconsciously.

“…Is something wrong Kato?”

I replied and took a bite of the meet skewer I had grabbed once more.
Because I resumed movement immediately, Lily probably noticed my odd action and snuggled up near me. She was staring at the side of my face questioningly.

“No. It’s just that Gerbera said she has only seen human beings three times other than us.”
“That should be the case…right?”
“In-indeed”

When I prompted her with a glance, Gerbera nodded like a small child. Kato, being aware of Gerbera’s weak point continues.

“School uniform…have you met a human wearing clothes like us?”
“Those like mine lord who transferred hither or those with cheat abilities? No, this one hath not met any like that.”
“In that case…senpai?”

Because Kato was drawing it out I looked up from my meat skewer.
These days the unrest has settled down.

Still when our eyes met there was a strange beat in my heart.

“Haven’t you found a dismembered corpse before? If it’s true that Gerbera didn’t meet those who transferred, even if

it wasn't her doing, the fact that they were killed won't go away."
"…come to think of it that did happen."

We had found the dismembered corpses of five people including a cheat ability user before.
Despite being a『Warrior』with only high physical and magical ability, cheat ability users are not often killed by monsters. With their unfair battle ability, if it wasn't a high rank monster they wouldn't be killed. It would be difficult even for Lily.
Originally we were afraid of meeting this high monster we had found evidence of and it was suggested that we move from the cave we rested in.

Afterwards we were ambushed by a white Arachne who is a high monster.
So surely I unconciously thought 'was it her doing?' — rather I almost fogot about it for various reasons I did not think about it too much — if you think about it calmly it is a little odd.

That corpse was bitten to death by a beast.
However, even if white Arachne is a high monster it's not a large carnivore type of monster.

"Dismembered body? What is that?"

As I thought, Gerbera doesn't know about it.
In that case, other than her, is there an exceptional monster nearby?

Otherwise it wouldn't make sense, however if that was the case, there are some problems.
It isn't that two great monsters…cannot coexist; it is just that in order to become a high monster they need to live for a long time and not coming across each other in that time would be difficult.

The monsters do not come near the Arachne nest we are in now. That's because the monsters which approach here have been eliminated for a long time.
Monsters are not only hostile to humans, but other monsters except for their own kind. In some respects computer RPGs are good. Monsters of various kinds are equals and do not attack each other.

We are five days travel by foot from where we saw the dismembered corpse. It's possible a monster could do it in less.

I'm overwhelmed by the length of Gerbera's life. Something feels out of place with two powerful monsters coexisting in such close proximity for such a long period.

Well, there are things like this I guess…?
Since there isn't any evidence to deny it, I could only accept it.

"Anyway, it never hurts to keep in mind"
"That's right, isn't it?"

Still, Kato is excellent.
I realize that I did not properly notice it.

An able person…if I had to say it feels like it's slightly off the mark. Kato makes good points. Even if you subtract the bad points, in my eyes she is a clever and wise character.
It feels like she often pulls the short straw by comparison… this is only because she herself causes it by hesitating.

What makes her do so?
When I think about it it's a mystery.

…What do you think about and how?

It was suspicious when I thought about it.

“…”

I grit my teeth and swallowed a bitter thought.

I am disgusted with myself for thinking this way about my saviour
Since I have finally become conscious of her and can think about it normally…there is no longer an excuse for thinking this way. The fact that she is indeed my benefactor and life saviour cannot be ignored.

In any case.
The only thing that is certain is that she has the ability to cover for a part that I’m lacking in.

I told Gerbera that if she needed to consult someone she should speak with Kato.

That’s right.

After all I have to do something about her relations with the others soon.

While confirming that it’s not possible to do so now, I had already fallen asleep in preparation for tomorrow which is the last valuable opportunity with Gerbera.

…Realizing that this was a failure, it would become something for a little later.

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Master of Monsters Vol 2 Chapter 6

By
Cyrogen

16th December 2015

It's been too long.

Part way through this chapter I gave up on making Gerbera sound archaic to reflect her speaking mannerism for the sake of releasing today. I will return and properly edit at a later date. Also, this has been slightly rushed. I do apologize for this.

As you may have already guessed, there's more to come later today.
Translated by yours truly, with some help from Fairy
TLC'd by Vaen, Fairy and Hellomojo.

6. Passage of the spirit, the way of magical power

Outline of the previous chapter:

I've made 23 chapters and confirmed the existence of humans in this other world.

6

The next day I decided to leave the Arachne's nest early in the morning.
"My Lord. I hath done as thee requested."
Right before leaving, Gerbera handed me upside down clothing
They are clothes I asked Gerbera to make before.
Though Gerbera weaves at an impressive speed, producing this in such a small amount of time seems to have been unreasonable as half of the clothes appears to be from previous stock.
The shirt is of simple design with slightly thick long sleeves made durable for walking through the forest. The pants are also white becoming white top and bottom.
The coordination feels out of place and unusual, but complaining about that is a luxury.
"It suits thou my lord."
"…Is that so?"
When I return from changing my clothes, Gerbera fidgets and her cheeks turn red for some reason.
Was she glad I was wearing the clothes she made or was it because she noticed we are wearing similar clothes?
Or because this is a spider's thread, in a certain sense it can be said that my appearance『Is wrapped in a thread she produced』perhaps she could feel something.
In addition, when I put on the blackish hue protective gear that Rose prepared for me on top… you might say the colour balance has been attained.
Finally I added a sword of pseudo-Damascus steel on the belt I made with a vine and my preparations are complete.
It's perfect at present, the work have been divided with equipment made by Rose and clothes woven by Gerbera, I want them to cooperate with each other's work in the future.
Right now they'll cooperate for my sake, but if the present state of them being unwilling to work continues into the future it'll be problematic.
It won't be resolved immediately and it isn't necessary to rush it. After all their ill feelings are lost it's should be possible.
"My lord!"
I suddenly notice for some reason Gerbera is writhing, her expression seemed anxious as she looked at my face.
"What's wrong?"

“Nay, I hath thought my lord looketh a tad pale.”
“I do?”
I touched my cheeks unintentionally.
The feeling at the tips of my fingers seems somewhat cold.
“No, there’s nothing wrong in particular. Don’t worry about it.”
Certainly I had a lot to think about recently and I was not able to sleep very much yesterday.。

However, my physical condition isn’t bad and I don’t feel sleepy either. Some fatigue remains from walking day after day, but it’s still at a level where I can stay active. I can’t rest from this amount.

“Let’s go”

I suggested to Gerbera who lowered her eyebrows anxiously as I left the nest.

She also seemed to understand that I’m truly fine when I start moving and said nothing further.

After an hour or so we came to the spring which was our destination.

As it’s the water source for the surrounding creatures, the spring is considerably large.

We continued walking further for approximately one hour and encountered two monsters.

A Rough Rabbit with the body of a bear and the head of a rabbit and the other one was a crawfish like monster about one metre in length that had broken the surface of the water of the spring and jumped out.

It’s something I’d like to encounter once more.

Because both are monsters I’m encountering for the first time, I want to feed them to Lily to increase our war potential.

…It’s enough to eat once? Though that is a reasonable opinion, I’m not talking about that.

To make use of Lily’s mimesis ability you must serve her the majority of the monster’s corpse. In other words it means that we cannot eat the Rough Rabbit and Big Scissors.

Of course, our food situation is not so desperate that I am driven to eat the meat of these.

There is enough Fire Fang meat saved up.

Simply, there’s no reason to challenge myself to eat, but I wanted to eat them.

…Quite frankly I was tired of Fire Fang meat.

I wasn’t a person who particularly loyal to a specific meal, but I got tired of eating the same food all the time.

I want to eat the meat of a different animal soon.

Other than a lizard or a rat.

In particular the Big Scissors looks delicious.

As it is a crawfish it might be a little rough and tasteless, but I held the firm belief that would not be much of a problem problem. Anyway, the current food circumstances are just too bad.

However I can no longer increase our baggage.

Furthermore whilst I continue searching I look forward to taking home the next Big Scissors as food.

Whilst I though about such things, Gerbera finished 『Packing』and came over here.

Because the Fire Fang is huge, the cocoon that wrapped it up was very large.

The sight of it being dragged is a little humorous.

“Good work.”

“My lord as well, thy work was good.”

Gerbera says words of appreciation and presents the flask Rose made to me.

Even though there is a spring nearby, if just drinking it causes a stomach ache it would be embarrassing. I used what I brought with me as drinking water.

Because water is heavy, except for a small amount to quench my thirst while walking, everything was entrusted to Gerbera whilst moving.

“Thank you.”

I expressed my gratitude and tried to take the flask.

At that time.

“…tsu”

The reflected scenery stings my eyes, innumerable small glittering lights scattered in my sight.

It was just an instant.

However, the timing was bad.

My hand missed receiving the flask Gerbera presented me.

“Ah.”

The Flask slipped through my fingers and fell to the ground.

There is a glug glug sound as the water was spilled.

I quickly picked up the bottle, but the contents have decreased by roughly one-third.

…Now I’ve done it.

Of course, it’s not that I regretted losing the water.

“Is thou troubled, my lord?”

Gerbera looked suspicious and stared at me.

“My lord, It hath been on thine mind, but how thou looketh is strange to thee.”

“…What is strange?”

“Tis only sometimes, I see thou make unusual mistakes. Could it be thou art holding secrets from thee?”

She says so and stares at me with her red pupils.

Staring and staring, the intensity of her gaze has not softened.

She seems to be very certain.

I thought that I would be able to deceive her somehow, apparently it seems impossible.

It's hopeless huh?

Generally I was spending most of my time with her these days. She's been supporting me, even if it wasn't this time, she would have noticed eventually.

"It's not serious."

After some necessary introductory remarks, I decided to disclose the circumstances with Gerbera.

"For some reason my eyes are strange sometimes."

"Thy eyes?"

"Yeah. They blur and when it's bad I can see glittering white lights…"

"Art that not important!?"

Gerbera jumps with all eight legs and grips my face with both hands.

It wasn't a speed I could avoid.

I was made to look at her handsome features, which made me think they must have been made by a god, as she closely looked at my face.

"Muu"

In a distance where her breath can reach, she stared at my face fixedly.

I had been shocked unintentionally, but Gerbera didn't have the slightest amorous atmosphere about her.

She stares at my face with an expression which is so serious it's scary.

Of course, if you could understand the condition of others by doing so, doctors wouldn't be needed.

There might also be doctors in this world. …Or maybe there aren't. In this world magic exists.

"Just sometimes. It's not a big deal. I feel fine."

When I rapidly make excuses, a small wrinkle forms between Gerbera's eyebrows.

"True is that?"

"Yeah. When tired, a human being's vision blurs. It's a common thing."

"My lord spoke the same the day before, hath thou deceived thee?"

"…Anyway, let go of me."

While thinking of the phrase 'you reap what you sow', I cover the lower half of her face with my hand and strongly

push her away.

Though it may have been a bit rough on a woman, however the unusually tough Gerbera didn't seem to care. She crossed her arms and tilted her head in thought.

"However, white lights. …Yes?"

Her beautiful pure white eyebrows frowned slightly.

"What's wrong Gerbera?"

"Tis' nothing. A little curious was I."

When I asked, Gerbera put her slim right hand before my eyes.

"Thous be sure, look to the hand of thee."

"Uh huh?"

"…I'm not too good at this sort of thing but"

Gerbera says so and screw up her eyes for a few seconds.

"Eh?"

As I was watching Gerbera's fingertip I instinctively let out a stupid sound.

A white light on Gerbera's fingertip was flickering.

It was the light I had been seeing sometimes these past few days.

"H,How…"

"Tis as I suspected."

Gerbera seemed a little tired as she withdrew her hand.

The light has already disappeared from her fingertip.

"I thought it was impossible but"

Gerbera let out a small and said,

"My lord is obtaining the ability to perceive magical power."

"Magic power? I am?"

"Indeed."

Gerbera makes a large nod with a serious face. I do not get the feeling she's joking.

However, while it isn't impossible, I'm not going to just accept her words without a doubt.

"Though you say that Gerbera. I shouldn't have an aptitude for magic. Because in the colony the person with the magician cheat ability clearly said so."

"Even if you tell me that, it's still troubling."

Though I give a reasonable opinion, Gerbera did not stop thinking about it.

“…However, if that is true, it’s certainly a strange story.”

Gerbera folds her spider legs and sat down, leaning her head to the side.

“Anyone can use magic so long as they hast magical power. As long they hast magical power it isn’t hard to see magical power. After all it’s an indispensable art to sense magical power when handling magic. …However the quality doesn’t change easily.”

“It’s like that?”

“Tis indeed so, attaining of thy magical power is of the many within thy self. Tis mine belief that my lord’s quantity of thy magical power hath doth raised for a reason.”

For some reason.

She had an unpleasant expression.

It shouldn’t be a disadvantage in particular, rather it should be convenient for me, it’s only a little unpleasant that I don’t understand the cause.

“Is it because of the defeated monsters? If I’m not mistaken, I can take their magical power when I kill a monster. When I was at the colony they tried to strengthen the search corps with that.”

“That is not an efficient method. Even if thou defeated one hundred or one thousand could thou actually feel it? Of course, with the way I am and the way mine lord is, thither art some differences.”

“Is it because the original amount of magical power is different?”

“It’s as thou say. However thou might say, though to begin with just my lord and I being together, it is not all there is to it.”

“That’s also true.”

“In other words there are more efficient methods, it is possible my lord unknowingly undertook such measures.”

“That’s a little difficult to think about. If a method exists, I want to know it by all means.”

I am personally strengthened if my magical power increases.

How much work is required to survive in this severe world?

“Though, it’s not a bad thing if I can use magic.”

“…”

I conclude thus–possibly, Gerbera gives me a strange look as I set the problem aside.

“What art thou saying mine lord?”

“Huh?”

“Isn’t mine lord already using magic?”

You seem to be amazed, but unfortunately I don’t have a clue.

Therefore I asked,

“What is it?”

“A path is connected between us mistresses. That is also an excellent kind of magic.”

“Is that so?”

“How doesn’t mine lord know?”

“Even if you ask me…”

To her even more amazed expression, I scratch my head.

Even if they aren’t a cheat ability user they can use magic so long as they learn it. This is a theory which was established in the colony. However, in reality there were only a few exceptions where ordinary students of the 『Reserve Group』 who had the opportunity to learn magic.

For students of marriageable age and full of curiosity, the mysterious phenomenon called magic was of great interest. Therefore I also came across some information.

However, there were still many unknowns.

Although, now that she mentions it, she’s right, this mysterious power connecting between us seems impossible besides using magic.

Though there is the sense that all mysterious phenomena could easily be labelled as magic, often when thinking that way in this world it won’t be wrong.

Then was I using magic subconsciously?

In other words, my cheat ability is an always active type of magic.

A magic that connects my heart with monsters.

It feels kind of fancy when I think about it.

“…”

Now that I think about it, why would I be given a cheat ability like this?

I suddenly thought.

The people who were transferred to this world received cheat abilities.

This is fine thus far. Though the cause is unclear it’s inevitable there are some peculiarities to this world.

Then is it inevitable that I gained this ability?

If that’s the case, once again, why this power?

…Though I might appear to be complaining in dissatisfaction, I did not want to complain in particular.

Maybe I wouldn’t have had to face such difficulties back in the colony if I had an easily understood ability. Maybe a passive (always on) ability is much too hard to use compared to these my cheat ability seems very subtle, though.

Honestly, I wouldn’t want to stand besides someone who grumbles like that if he were in my position.

Because I possessed this ability I could meet Lily here.

It’s impossible to have any complaints.

So I just wondered.

Why am I like this…?

“Unh? Wait, if it’s the path”

Then suddenly Gerbera exclaimed

I’m startled and brought back from my thoughts.

When I look, Gerbera appears to have noticed something and stopped moving.

Is something wrong?

…. and about the same time when I was thinking, with a slightly different leap from several minutes ago, Gabera grab my face with both of her hands.

Not again/Again?

Or so I thought, but the situation was slightly different.

“…”

She looks into my eyes the same way as a little while ago.

However her red eyes appeared to be focusing somewhere else this time.

“…So it’s like that?”

“Hey, Gerbera.”

I couldn’t endure it and I called her name angrily.

Feigning displeasure, even though I must not do it, but my voice seems to be shaking a little.

“Please explain without just understanding on your own. Also, I would appreciate it if you let me go.”

I am irresponsible, but Gerbera should be more aware of the fact that she’s attractive as a member of the opposite sex to men.

Even at best of times, she held me with good will, which makes me reel with excitement.

To begin with she’s a member of my family. She a special existence to me, furthermore, yesterday, when I had a moment of weakness I had her spoil me.

Due to the unclear stance that I have regarding the relationship with my female household, I must not be irresponsible. Because I’ve made up my mind I want to defend this decision.

“Indeed. My apologies.”

Gerbera obediently released me as asked.

However she doesn't stop staring deep into my eyes.

"Please listen without being surprised my lord."

Gerbera began to speak to me whilst I felt uncomfortable.

"Inside of thy body"

"Uh huh."

"Mine magic is present."

"…huh?"

I'm dumbfounded by Gerbera's completely unexpected words.

"… That is, that …What do you mean?"

"I can not really say. Usually something like this is impossible."

Gerbera shook her long white hair with a baffled expression.

"However I can guess. Perhaps it's because of the connection between us. It's because it connects us with my lord."

"Wa, please wait a moment. So, what!? Is the increased magical power I've received from Gerba?

"Possibly Lily-dono and Rose-dono's may also be mixed in. It would be such a very small amount that I am not able to detect it."

"Such a thing…"

I was about to object reflexively when I noticed there was no evidence to deny her claim.

"Certainly…Certainly, then I can explain the phenomenon of『Flickering before my eyes』in question occurred since I made Gerbera a family member.

As far as I can remember, that『Flickering Light』…That is the detection of magical power, began whilst I was conversing with Lily on the 2nd morning after making Gerbera a family member.

At least, before Gerbera became a family member it never happened.

"But why is it only Gerbera?"

"Isn't it simply a matter of the quantity of magical power one possesses? For example, why do you think that magical power doesn't『leak out』from the connection? How about you think of it like magic power leaking out through the pathway? If the proportions stay the same then having a large amount of power means that more will spill out, right?"

"I see…"

I wasn't able to notice if a similar phenomenon had occurred until I made Gerbera a family member.

That reminds me, I heard that『magic dwells in the soul』in the colony.

I'm just an ordinary student who can't tell what kind of thing a soul is and can't distinguish a『Soul』from things like the『Heart』or『Mind』.

However, if you assume they are similar…Even if it isn't true, if you assume they are closely connected…Even if my path let's magic power through, it might not be strange.

Of course this isn't certain.

Nonetheless, that's not what was important to me.

"In short, what?"

After I moistened my lips with my tongue, I squeezed out my voice and asked,

"The more my family increase, the stronger my magic power becomes?"

"I expect it will be like that. Possibly my lord's current condition is splendid, in which case it may be possible that the amount of magic power will increase on it's own."

"If that's true…It's not bad."

My cheat ability isn't that strong.

Even if it has war potential, the fatal thing above all else is that I do not have the power to fight myself.

No matter how strong an army I collect, essentially I am a weak point that will likely be taken advantage of.

This discovery held the possibility that the weak point of my cheat ability can be buried.

After a really long time, I remembered the feeling of being excited.

"Would you like to immediately return to ask Lily to teach you magic?"

Originally this was not an option as I didn't have the talent for magic. I'd rather swing a sword and train my body.

However, the situation has changed now.

If my attainments rose somewhat, I might have to move in the direction that made best use of it.

"If I do that I would regret spending so long in this place without noticing"

Though it was true to my feelings, it might have been a mistake to put it into words.

"If I noticed a little sooner mine lord may have started a little earlier. …Ah, no. Well."

After she says so, Gerbera lowered her eyebrows as she noticed something.

"This is my fault."

"…"

It's because it would be inconvenient if I was stopped from going out that I didn't talk to anyone about the unusual things which had been occurring.

I cannot deny that Gerbera is part of the reason for this.

But, that is that and she has no need to be concerned with this matter.

"It isn't your fault in particular."

I patted the Gerbera's pure white head who had drooped her shoulders feeling despondent.

"My lord…"

"The things I did only upset you. To say it properly, it is something like my selfishness."

In fact it comes down to me lying to my comrades as well as various other intertwining factors.

This too may not be a good thing.

However, the recent situation has changed huh.

No. I will change.

I must change.

My own personal problems and my female family members' problems too.

I will settle everything.

I have to do that.

I should do that.

For I, who will be leading the girls, that is my responsibility…

"Umu?"

And at that time.

Gabera who sent me an earnest look, frowned her eyebrows.

"–My lord!"

流石に超一流の戦闘屋だけあって、切り替えは一瞬だった。

As one would expect from the super first class battle shop, the change is instant. (TN: Yes, he really called her a battle shop that's not a typo.)

The atmosphere becomes tingly and tense.

When I follow Gabera's glance , I half rose to my feet. In order to successfully pull off such reflexive movements, it may be that I've gotten used to it.

My eye caught the shadow of an animal beyond the trees of the forest.

I see it suddenly and thought it might be a Fire Fang for an instant, but the shadow is too small.

There is a medium sized dog though.

"…Fox?"

Triangular ears. Balloon tail.

That is a monster which is similar to the fox in my world.

Though it was large for a fox, because I was used to seeing Fire Fang's giant forms, the fox appeared fairly small.

Naturally, there is no such thing as the the small physical stature directly being proportional to the level of danger.

I remembered the knowledge I got at the colony.

“This guy…『Balloon Fox』!?”

At the same time when I call out the name which was given by the colony.

It sucked in air with a ‘suuuuuu’ and the body of the fox swelled greatly.

Like a balloon, a little while back it was a small body but it expanded right before my eyes.

The fox which became a spherical shape five times larger than it was originally, looked at us with murderous intent.

In order to intimidate the enemies, it swelled up like a pufferfish.

No, It’s different. This is how the Balloon Fox attacks.

“ GYAoOOO!”

The swollen body shrinks.

Together with the roar 3 orange fireballs were spat out.

“My lord!”

Gerbera carries me and jumps back.

As a result the avoided fireballs crashed into the tree behind us.

Just then the explosive flame which was curled up,

Collided into the trees, broke and burst into flames.

Gerbera immediately discarded the『luggage』for evasion–the cocoon wrapped monster receives the aftershock of the explosion and gets blown away and vanishes somewhere.

In particular,the rough rabbit seems to be used as a weight to counter balance. Only after that has subsided, from the fact that it was blasted away, I can see that the explosive power added into the fireball is not normal.

“…We’ve encountered a terrible fox fire.”

Although I had heard her words, it is rather absurd.

The flame that the Balloon Fox spits out is accompanied with a physical shock.

That was a consequence of compressing the air and heating it up. Although the temperature is lower compared the flame spat by Fire Fangs, the power can’t be compared.

“Fear not. This is not an opponent for me.”

Gerbera spoke words of encouragement after sensing the fear born by my mind.

What she says is reasonable.

Spending two or three seconds preparing preparing to attack is not necessary for Gerbera.

Just now, I did not prepare my stance, just in case we chose to run but if it's now, it is possible that we may take action before the fox spits out the fireball.

Actually, she would crush it instantly if the Balloon Fox chose to attack.

"Mu?"

However, that did not happen.

As soon as the Balloon Fox saw that it's first attack was evaded, it curled up its tail and ran away

That.. was a splendid decision.

….But this is not a situation to praise it.

"It has run away!"

" I understand! Let's go, my lord!"

If my memories serves me right, Balloon Fox are the same as Fire Fang, they are the type of monsters who tend to form packs together.

The chances of it running away to where others were is quite high.

We began pursuing the Balloon Fox which had escaped as we made arrangements as we had done with yesterday's Fire Fang.

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Master of Monsters Vol 2 Chapter 7

By
Cyrogen

16th December
2015

This chapter had contributions from most of RtD. I don't really know who exactly worked on what. None the less I hope you enjoy it.

Chapter 8 up soon.
7. The Tyranny Begins Once Again

Outline of the previous chapter:

Magic has become usable

–I'm already afraid of everything

7

The escaping balloon fox seemed somewhat faster than the Fire Fang that we chased yesterday.

Or perhaps I should say that this one is nimble

Along with it's tiny physique, it is also flexible.We may win against a Fire Fang if we go for a direct approach. But if we are in the forest with lots of obstacles, we need tactics against this Balloon Fox.

That said, it makes little difference. It is not enough to escape from Gerbera.

"…it doth not join up with its allies"

After chasing it for a few minutes, Gerbera muttered to herself.

"maybe it's a stray?"

While I'm being careful not to bite my tongue, I whispered to the beautiful face of Gerbera which was literally right in front of my eyes.

"Might very well be possible"

Closing the distance to my face to 3 centimeters, Gerbera replied in a whisper.

"If we were to chase it any further than this, it will be meaningless."

"Yeah, it might be good soon. If there is another chance, will you trap it for me?"

"Understood…However, because I'm advancing through the bushes, it will be difficult to catch it with my spider thread and also because I'm carrying my lord, I can't increase my speed….huh?"

Gerbera nodded to my request when suddenly she raised one of her eyebrows.

"Damn!"

Her red eyes narrowed.

“That whelp! It’s a blunder. He has exited into a wide open area.”

Just as Gerbera said, I could see a clearing in the forest a few dozen meters ahead.

When I was exploring through the forest, occasionally I ran into places like these.

The wideness is roughly about 10 meters wide huh. Like an elliptical shape opened up gaping wide in the forest.

While, there’s a little undergrowth, with just a glimpse we can see that the ground is reddish-brown.

Perhaps,a forest fire happened recently.

During the one second spent thinking that, Gerbera and I reached the area.

At the same moment Gerbera exited the forest,the Balloon Fox entered the bushes

“I won’t let you escape!”

Despite having the handicap of carrying me along, Gerbera nimbly jumped into the clearing without having so much as a single splinter touch me.

And that was what triggered the danger.

＊ ＊ ＊

….Let’s talk about one of the assumptions here.

In order to improve the efficiency of the monster encounters, we moved along the line of “Attack groups”. This was our method.

If I was talking about this to someone else, what would happen?

If I were to tell Lily, she would definitely come here worried.

If I were to tell Rose, I would definitely be completely opposed and will not come here in the first place.

And if I were to consult with Kato, she will definitely have noticed the trap that I’m unable to detect.

That way, at the very least we could’ve avoided the disaster that now follows.

For me falling down dangerously into a trap, I have personally recognized it.

I previously had considered this scenario…

——If it’s normal monsters, they are not worthy opponents for Gerbera. If they were rare monsters and above, they are within my ability. In any case, if there is a threat, it will only be the high monsters and they are not likely to be encountered…..

This is not wrong.

However, I had forgotten to consider one factor into my calculations.

I’m getting carried. I believe that’s a fatal element.

This itself is the greatest weakness of my cheat ability. I intended to be fully aware of this.
However, I was still being naive.

It does not mean that I had forgotten but my consideration was insufficient. My thinking is insufficient.

… No. I do not have the time to just think.

I need to resolve the ill feelings between Gerbera and Rose.

My unfulfilled promise with Kato.

In addition to the various other things I understood and didn't understand

There are countless things I can't afford to not think about which cannot be resolved in the span of a single day.

Because of this it was inevitable for some things to be overlooked.

The fact that last night I didn't notice the dismembered corpse at all until Kato pointed it out to me may be one example of this.

I've concluded that for me right now it's unthinkable to exceed Gerbera in combat ability.

Although I wasn't mistaken in this, having stopped thinking at that point was a mistake.

Certainly the white Arachne boasts an overwhelming power.

No matter what monster from this forest, attacking and winning with a frontal attack would be difficult.

But, one mustn't think 'whatever happens it'll be alright'.

After all, she's only one person.

Although it's obvious, us humans can only hold onto what we can carry with our 2 arms, and can only support what our 2 legs can hold upright.

In Gerbera's case it may be 8 legs, but the fact remains that there's a limit to what one can do.

It's common to say 'there's a limit to what a single person can do'.

"…Wha!?"

I opened my eyes wide.

The Balloon Fox that we were chasing ran into the underbrush. Suddenly, a different one which was already greatly inflated appeared from there.

The number of them which had surrounded as after we arrived in the middle of the clearing easily numbered over 30.

And then I realized it.

What I really should be mindful of is not encountering powerful monsters, but instead encountering an amount of monsters that Gerbera can't all hold back on her own.

At this moment, the relationship between the hunter and the hunted was reversed.

By the time I regretted my own thoughtlessness, the trigger was already pulled.

"UaAaAA!?"

Over a hundred fireballs came flooding towards us.

It was like a surging wall of flames heading towards us.

It came from 360 degrees around us with no place left to run.

In contrast to the red flames, I felt surrounded by the darkness of despair.

There's no way to phrase it other than to say we were careless.

Although the monsters don't have the emotions or the will of a human, they possess a keen intellect on the level of an animal.

Back on earth, hunting in a pack was a common tactic of wolves, lions, hyenas etcetera.

It's not strange then that the monsters would use a similar method.

The clearing in this forest then was nothing but an execution ground for we who were lured here.

….it's already hopeless.

I really believed that so strongly I already started to see my life flash before my eyes.

But, at that moment.

Gerbera who was still carrying me let out a yell full of fighting spirit.

"As if I shall let thee!"

Gerbera waved her hand and brandished a bunch of spider threads like a whip.

Almost unconsciously my line of sight followed where Gerbera's hand swung.

I looked over and there was an approaching fireball.

The spider webs which cracked like a whip, danced and crashed into some of the fireballs which had come flying.

I remembered the destruction of the trees from the explosion of the fireball used by the Balloon Fox just a little ago.

When the Balloon Fox's fireball strikes something solid it explodes.

Not to mention when it hits a spider thread swung down with the full might of a High Monster.

–You should blow it up first if you can't evade it.

This must have been Gerbera's thoughts.

The fireballs hit by the spider thread explode in the air one after another.

It is an extremely violent decision and at the same time it was the only way to avoid them.

The explosion occurred only several meters away at most. It is better than than being caught up in the explosion directly and naturally the hot wind surges by.

Gerbera held me tightly to her chest using her body as a shield to protect me, but none the less the heat wave baked my skin without mercy.

The only thing I could do was close my eyes and endure.

My scream in the midst of the roar doesn't even reach my own ears.

Endure. Endure.

The moment of the wind blowing past felt like several minutes.

And like that the blast past through my skin.

Half passed out I barely heard Gerbera's voice.

"It's not over master!"

Faster than I could think–What?–the situation changed.

"Uu,aAaAaaAa!?"

Before I could understand what was going on, I was surrounded by heat that flared up.

Some fireballs were burst with the spider string and Gerbera moved into the lower density area whilst carrying me.

The ground where a compressed fireball exploded was heated up and the air was still quite hot.

It is fortunate that Gerbera's jumping power is so great that the rush and withdrawal were almost instant.

At almost the same time, a large explosion occurred from behind.

Opening my closed eyes I witness a rising red flame.

A great number of fireballs spat by the Balloon Foxes struck the ground where we just an instant ago and they exploded all at once.

I shivered.

If Gerbera's decision had been even a moment slower we would have been in the middle of that explosion.

Perhaps I was only able to survive because of Gerbera.

But I who was with her could not get away with that.

It's doubtful whether or not a corpse was needed to stop the pattern.

Even during the current withdrawal, I was suffering considerable burns to my face, hands and feet.

If I didn't have the clothes made by Gerbera before we departed, maybe I would have died of shock from burns across my whole body.

"Let's withdraw!"

Gerbera shouts out desperately as she jumps repeatedly.

Twice, thrice.

She jumps and tries to escape from the pack of Balloon Foxes.

Gerbera had her body bent low for the third jump…However the claw on her spider leg stabbed into the ground

causing her to rapidly break.

She could not help doing so.

“Impossible…It cannot be”

The groan as she spat blood wasn’t suitable for her.

When I caught sight of what left her at a loss for word I also became doubtful.

Innumerable huge lilies (TN: The actual flower) hung down from the trees and bloomed.

It was a monster I knew which looked like a vine.

Because the monster I hunted as a gift for Lily yesterday was this monster…it was a Gun Vine.

The Gun Vine is a parasitic monster that take nourishment from trees and aggressively attacks animals.

Gerbera was fleeing while carrying me with her and stumbled into a place filled with Gun Vines.

The reaction was fierce.

The weapon of the Gun Vine–the origin of it’s name, innumerable seed like bullets fired from the lily like flower.

I was only able to feel the first bullet that shot into the back of my left hand.

It’s already the aftershock.

“GAa, Ah! aA!”

I got hit on the shoulder, in the stomach and blood gushed out of my thigh.

Maybe it was fortunate that my body was half paralyzed a short while ago and I couldn’t properly feel the pain.

Aside from that it’s a terrible misfortune however.

No, maybe it’s more appropriate to say that this kind of『Luck is Bad』.

Because the reason why I think『I’m unlucky to come into a colony of Gun Vines during an escape』is that I misunderstand the problem.

No matter how bad my luck is this can’t be coincidence.

This is naturally included as part of the Balloon Foxes certain kill trap.

It was the result of Gerbera’s choice that the escape route lead to a colony of Gun Vines. It’s probably the direction which she had the highest probability of escaping–in other words she should have broken through where the Balloon Foxes enclosure was thinnest.

That trap was placed there.

It seems that the Balloon Foxes have teamed up with the Gun Vines.

Unlike the Monster A.I. in a RPG game, this worlds Monster don’t rush straightforwardly into combat.

Although, in this 『cooperation』I don’t know which party is the one being used.

Such is the nature.

In this deadly situation, I'm moments away from death, of that I am certain.

It is very likely, that for weak monsters like Balloon Foxes to survive in the forest they had formed groups.

I don't know how many hits Gerbera received nor do I know how many she had taken for me.

She desperately tried to protect me from taking any fatal attack, such as to the head.

But it was futile.

The surroundings are filled with Gun Vines again.

A flock of Balloon Foxes are approaching from the rear.

I manage to endure the attack, and Gerbera is barely able to protect me in time.

It is praiseworthy that I am able to survive up until now, this fight is more than I could handle.

My consciousness begins to fade, I ready myself for death.

However.

"Doeth….not jest"

" "

Once again Gerbera had regressed.

Possibly, to giving in to her rage…… this way of living is how she must have survived for all those years. And perhaps, that is how she came to be a High Monster.

Similar to the time Kato demolished her immature logic, she has lost all reason.

She had become that sort of Monster, with the same low level emotional intelligence of a wild animal. The Balloon Fox was unprepared for her devastating attack.

"Doeth not jest!"

Gerbera cries out as to repel the inevitable future, as if to hold my soul in place…… as it tries to leave my body.

As soon as she had the chance, she sheltered the fallen me with the spider form of her lower body.

"…"

I lied down on my back and looked towards the sky.

The reflected figure of the white arachne, High Monster, can be seen in my eyes.

For far too long she had been alone, and lonely.

She has always fought alone.

She is not used to protecting someone else while fighting.

Her true battle prowess is shown.

Now her fetter had been secured and she is free to do as she pleases.

Without missing a cue, Gerbera began her offensive assault. In a split second she has caught up to a Balloon Fox and the Gun Vine who were charging up for their next attack.

“Never again! Tis my fault! I’m about to allow my lord to perish!」

Now that both her hands are free, she is able to use the full potential of her spider thread. The thread is scattered all over the place.

Trees, Monster, even unrelated objects.

Because she didn’t aim, her accuracy is off, but she didn’t care.

It wasn’t necessary.

Her spider web indiscriminately clung to everything, except me, who was hidden beneath her.

“AaAaaaAAAAA!”

The girl’s blood curdling scream causes the forest to shiver.

Gerbera’s eight legs fumbled at the ground.

Her claws pierced deeply into the ground, fixing Gerbera’s body into place.

And the terror of the white monster had arrived.

What Gerbera did is a simple feat, 『she merely used her spider thread』.

However, these simple acts of raw power are purely monstrous and only a true monster could perform them, is that not the case?

——it was as if she had become the center of the world, the scene was just that dramatic.

The eyes of all who are present focus on the white spider who is releasing a tremendous killing intent. A tree is yanked out of the ground and then many other trees are sent flying, a thunderous roaring collision of smashing trees can be heard. The Gun Vine that happen to be caught up in the crossfire was torn apart and flattened, while the Balloon Fox had dodged by rolling away.

Everything was gathered up by the spider-girl’s threads and rolled into a ball.

All that had been caught is bound together and crushed.

Each and every thing was hurled into the the air and collided together.

A shower of fragmented wreckage rained down from the sky like snowflakes.

Nothing remained. Its original form had dispersed.

Despite the circumstances, I couldn’t help but want to laugh.

How irresponsible.

……to have failed even though our forces are more capable. I messed-up, this is completely my blunder.

How pathetic.

Haven't I failed them as a Master?

I'm so ashamed I want to die.

In the situation where it appears I could die if left alone it's a foolish thing to think about.

"My Lord!"

Nevertheless, I can't die now.

This life is no longer my own, I have to protect Lily and Rose. And Gerbera is still desperately trying to save me.

I have a reason to live.

「I'll bring thee to Lily-dono immediately! Don't lose heart!」

Blood gushes from every area of my body.

My skin is burnt away, leaving scorched darkened red blisters.

Every inch of his ruined body is covered in wounds.

Will I….. die?

Compared to the time when I was alone, what death means to me now is completely different from before. Is what I thought.

As Gerbera makes her way through the forest, she carries me in her arms. I could only helplessly struggle to stay alive.

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Master of Monsters Vol 2 Chapter 8

By
Cyrogen

16th December
2015

On the third day of Christmas, RTD gave to me, three chapters of Master of Monsters…

Well, 2 chapters, then the second one again, then finally the third one.

This chapter was done by Vaen.

****Cyro edit*** Please hold, trying to fix this. Sol went to sleep 😛

Fixed! I think?*

08. The way sisters should be

Outline of the previous story:
Gerbera remembered turning over the table in a fit of anger.

8
Gerbera promptly carried me under her arms and headed straight for her nest.

All the way my consciousness was faint.
Perhaps due to my burns I didn't feel much pain.

Without meeting any monsters on the way, the white arachne returned me to the nest at full speed.

"Master!?"
"S.. senpai!"

Rose turned around and screamed in a particularly unladylike manner, while Kato's face turned pale.

“Master!”

Lily jumped up and snatched me away.

I was laid to rest face up on a bed.
They tore off my armor and removed my bloodstained clothes.

Lily took a moment to catch her breath.
Or possibly, she swallowed a scream welling up inside of her.

Right after, a white light came from her hand.
It was healing magic.
The flow of blood hemorrhaging from the bullet wounds slowed down.
As expected of magic. I calmed down and surrendered myself to the warm light.

….or that’s what I would’ve done if I could.

“aAaA,AAh, GAAaAA!?”

As the medical treatment was progressing, the nerves that were previously stunned now came alive again.
Despite this, my wounds were still far from fully healed.
Although basic healing magic includes an analgesic effect to some extent, my current situation is far beyond what it can cover up.
Obviously, since advanced sedatives don’t exist here I have no choice but to clench my teeth and bare with it.

Kato was shouting something.
Lilly inserted her finger into my mouth. So that I wouldn’t bite my tongue she pressed it down locking it to my jaw.

Now it was Lily who shouted.
My body was being pinned down by hard slippery legs. While my body was writhing in pain Rose must be suppressing me.

Only Gerbera’s voice could not be heard.
I wonder where she went off to.
A part of my mind that was desperately trying to escape the pain was constantly thinking such things.

“Healing magic can somehow deal with the burns, but the pellets that were shot inside…”

I heard Lilly’s heartbreaking voice.
For some reason they were arguing back and forth.
Because I mostly regressed into an animal-like state I had lost the ability to understand their words.
Right now I have nothing left. Nothing but pain.

“…Rose, give me a knife.”

My ears were picking up sounds.
But I understood no meaning from them.

I didn’t want to understand.

“I’m sorry, Master”.

Foreign matter… body… inside…

“UgoOh, UuOGAh, AaA!!”

It hurts… it hurts, ithurtsithurtsithurtsithurtsithuuuurts!

Waves of pain were slamming into my brain.
If this can still be called pain then what the hell did I feel up till now?
At this point I can't believe this is anything other than something created to destroy my very being.

With my impaired body in excruciating agony all I could do was writhe around.

My restrained teeth were biting into Lilly's skin which mimics that of a young girl. It looked like they were almost torn off entirely.
Her finger melted into the flexible body tissue of a slime and kept my teeth from breaking.

Every time the pain wrecked through my body like an electric shock, my body moved around unnaturally.
A pair of puppet arms were creaking while trying to restrain my own arms, which were flailing around by reflex.
Although my flesh was getting covered in bruises my body was jumping around by itself.

Stomach, shoulder, clavicle, flanks, thighs.
One after another pellets were getting scattered around the bed with damp sounds.

My time in hell went on.
This is the price I pay for my foolishness.
I'd nearly rather lose consciousness, but I understood how bad that would be.

It's like sailors caught in a storm. The moment their hands let go it's all over. Sinking in the darkness, never to come up again.

I could do nothing but earnestly hold on.

I wonder how much time has passed by now.

By the time I couldn't recognize pain anymore as being pain the operation smelling of blood came to an end.
I received healing magic again.
Magic is the greatest. Without this I've no idea how many times I would've died.

"Why did this…!?"

It took a long time for me to recover from being reduced to a state similar to an animal.

"All the pellets were removed. The wounds all healed up, and even the burns…"

I could sense the white light of healing magic through my closed eyelids.
The pain from my wounds has gone away.

However, my body felt bizarrely languid.
It's obvious that the body will be sore after strenuous activity. My body felt the danger of coming so close to death, although I don't remember it well.
Feeling exhausted is obviously to be expected. However… I get the feeling this dull feeling isn't just caused by fatigue.

Fundamentally speaking, it feels like something came out of my body and went missing.
It feels like there's still something coming out.

To give an example, I feel like a container with a hole in the bottom.

Because of this I can't put strength into any part of my body.

I can't even make the tip of my finger twitch.
On top of that a white mist was approaching me on the edge of my consciousness.

If I were to pass out now, I would never wake up again. Such a feeling hadn't left me even now.
I wonder if this means that the wounds I received were just that severe.

I understand that healing magic is by no means omnipotent.
Even Lilly had to recover for days. Moreover, there's no treatment possible if you die.

Perhaps my body exceeded this limit.
If that's so, will I die like this after all?

… I don't want to die.
I can't allow myself to die here.
After all, I still haven't…

"…'tis mine fault"

Only now did I hear Gerbera's voice

I felt like it had been quite a while since I heard her.
I slowly opened my eyes.
Even just that took a lot of effort for me now.

Only a narrow field of view opens up to me.
Lilly and Rose were beside me.
Lilly's hand had reformed and she thrust it into my mouth again. Her other hand was glowing with healing magic and placed near my chest.
Rose should have been straddling my waist earlier but now she's sitting at my right hand side. She looks ready to restrain me the moment I go wild again.
I also saw Kato who had a stiff expression on her face and her hand on Rose's shoulder.

…Gerbera, where is she?

While only being able to move my eyes I looked for her.
I found her right away.
She sat on a different bed about 3 meters away, with her 8 legs folded and overall looking very dejected.

"'Tis all… mine fault."
Her drooping shoulders made her look crestfallen
Her face is normally white as it is, but now it looked like bleached paper.

"… Could you explain the circumstances?", Lily asked.
There was no way to tell what she was thinking from her tightly controlled voice or the expression on her face. Right now, even I don't have the composure to face her head on.

"We…"

Gerbera obediently began to talk about what had happened.
About how we started an investigation together. What we were trying to do, the discussion between us. How we weren't able to find any family members, looking for different measures, thinking there has to be a water source because of the many monsters. Taking on the herd, thinking it would go well but having it turn into a disaster…

In summary, her recollection was the same as mine.

Except for one thing which was decisively different.

“…everything was my fault”
She was crouching down while holding her white head in her hands.

“I couldn’t change after all. I can’t change mine inborn nature. In the end I brought calamity upon our lord.”

She feels obligated to take responsibility.
Having me get injured is now part of history which she can’t wipe away.
Because of that she’s now tormented by some form of trauma.

“How foolish. I shouldst hast known! If I am together with all of thou ’tis certain thou will all come to regret it sooner ‘r later. . . !”

I made a lot of plans for her sake. If I didn’t have her battle power on my side there’s no way I would have challenged the herd of monsters.
With this way of looking at it it’s possible to say it was Gerbera’s fault.

But even with this viewpoint the one who failed was ultimately myself.

Gerbera really did very well.
The fact that I can still draw breath even now is without a doubt a result of her efforts.
There isn’t even a fragment of a reason for her to feel responsible for what happened. I got hurt because of what I did by myself, so she’s absolutely wrong about this.

However, at least within her heart that was the truth.

“I shouldst hast nev’r been beside him in the first place.”

Gerbera sank into depression, and with that my scheme collapsed as well.
I intended for her to make up for her earlier mistakes so that Rose would acknowledge her.

Instead, rather than making any sort of recovery we got ourselves in this mess.
Whatever the reason may be, it’s a fact that she couldn’t protect me.
Because of me her list of mistakes has only piled up further.

Although she’s depressed like that I can’t even call out to her with my body in this state.
I can’t even make any excuses for her sake like this.

Even when I’m about to lose something important to me, I can’t do anything but witness it.

… ah, shit.
Why did it have to end up like this.

It’s not like I made a move without thinking it through.
I didn’t go in optimistically with a half-playful mindset.

I thought it would be okay if I first thought about what I would do and then worried about it for a while.
But I ended up overlooking everything important, I did my best but in the end everything turned into a massive failure.
I went through such pain, almost died and it still seems like I might die anyway.

And finally I’m about to lose something so important.

Really, I wonder why.

If I could have gotten along well with everyone I would've been satisfied with just that.

"Gerbera"

At that point, a calm voice called out her name.
It was Lily's, though I didn't realize it at first.

She had calmed down to that extent. Although I was in this state before her, she's fully composed.
Her pretty teeth lightly chewed her glossy lips, but she maintained a calm face.

Maybe she's deliberately smoothed out her composure. It could be pure mimicry. After all, she's that sort of being and she excels at showing others what she wants.

However, if that's true she's surely bottling up her feelings inside herself.

"You said it was your fault Master got injured?"

Lily's tone of voice was a bit lower than usual.

"And that because of this you shouldn't be beside him?"

The feeling she tried to repress leaked out a little at the end of that sentence.

That was definitely anger.
Lily was silently angry.
However, it didn't seem that anger was directed at my getting hurt.

"Do you think that's what Master wishes for? What do you think Master went to such lengths for? Do you mean to throw out his feeling just like that?"

Lily got angry at Gerbera for taking the blame upon herself.

"But, I…"
"'But' nothing. You don't understand anything. Really, you don't get it at all. Masters feelings or our feelings…!"

Lily shook her head and directed a withering glare at Gerbera.

"Listen Gerbera. Before you became one of our comrades you, the white arachne, taught me something.
"I did?"
"Yeah. That was that I lacked strength. Both Mentally and physically and I also lacked experience. I understood very well then that I couldn't help Master by myself. To the point of really hating it, you know."

Rather than saying she was 'taught' it's probably more appropriate to say she had the facts thrown in her face.
Her voice sounded bitter, but she bravely faced her own shortcoming.

"but, at that point we realized we had to join forces. Probably, all of us in this household lack in some parts and that's just the sort of beings we are. That's why, if we don't work together as sisters and complement one another it'll surely be hopeless."

Lily's voice seemed to have recovered.
Probably, her answer to the problem already came out from within her.

"I'm Master's first family member. Therefore you could say I'm something like Master's eldest daughter. Because of that I've decided to become someone worthy of that role.

Seeing her make such a proud statement with her chest held high, She seemed quite a bit more impressive than how I remember her.

“Even if I’m not a reliable older sister, I would certainly never reject or abandon my younger sister.”
“Lily-dono…”
“No matter how you feel about yourself, I don’t care about that at all.”

So it turns out that Lily had already fully accepted Gerbera from the beginning, even though she had gotten me injured.
I found myself wondering about how that ever happened.

“I want you to support Master as well. I thought that way before and still do so even now.”
“Nevertheless”

Although she had held her tongue and listened intently, she now began speaking.

“Yea together with Lily-dono, what assistance doth thou believe I couldst provide f’r my lord in this state?”

Unlike Lilly who can use healing magic, Gerbera has no skills to heal wounds sustained in battle.

“There is not a thing I can do. If there wast I would ha’ made sure things went differently. What art thou saying to someone who couldst not protect him”

“No, there is something you can do”.

With slightly downcast eyes Lily denied her words.
Despite looking so resolute before, now she almost had an apologetic look on her face.

“In fact, it might be something that only you can do.”
“A thing only I can do? Doth such a thing exist?”

With a nod Lilly looked in my direction.

“As you can see Master has lost his energy. Do you have any idea why that is, Gerbera?”
“I would presume ’tis because he sustain’d great injury. I heard humans to be weak beings.”
“Yeah, that’s normally correct. But, in this case it’s not like that.”

Gerbera had a puzzled frown on the face.

“What doth thou mean?”

“Within me lie the memories of a human called Miho Mizushima. I also have the memories of my life as a monster up till now. Because of this I can say that Master’s condition isn’t normal.”
“Not normal? What dost thou mean specifically?”
“Master’s wounds have long since been healed. My healing magic was certainly effective. Since he made it this far he should be fine already.”

Gerbera’s expression turned increasingly baffled.

“But, My lords countenance hast become paler by the moment, hath it not?”
“Yeah. That’s why there has to be a different reason for his weakening. I also know what this reason is, but I don’t know ‘why’ this has happened.”
“Ay?”
“Master’s body no longer has sufficient magical energy.”

As Lily frankly stated thus, I stared at Gerbera.

“Gerbera, don’t divert your eyes and look carefully. You should surely understand.”

Gerbera gave a start as Lilly pointed it out to her. Up till now she had been trying to look away.
Urged on by Lily, she now timidly turned her eyes straight at me.

“…Certainly, it doth seem My lord’s magical energy is running out.”

Gerbera narrowed her red eyes and muttered while looking at me.
Earlier Gerbera was able to see the increase in my magical power and also the cause of this, and Lily investigated it herself as well. I’m sure that the fact I’m losing my magic power is guaranteed.

Lily nodded and opened her mouth.

“All living beings in this word possess magical power to some extent. Monsters have a particularly large amount of magic power, but any creature is endowed with magic. Although I’m not sure why but people from a different world like Master also seem to have magical power, but that doesn’t mean they have a cheat-like ability for it, right? If anyone can use magic then everyone has magic power after all.”

Lily cut her words short and paused for a moment.

“Well, those things don’t matter much now. The problem at hand is that the lack of magical energy is causing abnormal effects. It probably is obvious that it would. For example, in my case I would lose control of my form and Rose would stop being able to move. I don’t know the effect it would have on any or all living beings, but it does look like even people from a different world are affected in a bad way.”

“…I have understood what thou meanst to say”

Gerbera had a difficult expression after coming to understand the circumstances.

“But, what wouldst thou suggest I do? As the cause remainst unknown no cure is possible.”
“True, a real cure is impossible. Without knowing the cause investigating a cure would be hard. However, we may be able to try symptomatic therapy.”
“Symptomatic therapy?”
“Yeah. I want you to share some of your magic power with Master”

Gerbera opened her red eyes wide upon hearing Lilly’s request.

“My magic power, thou sayeth”?
“If I were to say to imagine a blood transfusion… you probably wouldn’t get it. Ehm, basically, Magic has a path through which magic power flows, right? Through it magic power was channeled so it could be increased. Therefore, should it not be possible to share magic power deliberately this way?
“Lily, if I may.”

Kato interjected.

“To me the example of a blood transfusion is easy to understand. Because of this I have to ask whether or not we have to worry about something like an incompatibly in blood type?”

Kato had a poor complexion, but she remained calm enough to point out the risks in the treatment.

“I understand what you mean, but it will be all right.”

Lily’s eyes glimpsed towards Kato.

“… I think. Master has already accepted Gerbera’s magic before so I would estimate the chances of complications to be low.”
“And what shall we do once problems do showeth themselves!”

Gerbera almost screamed.
No wonder. Lily’s thinking is merely conjecture. A poorly executed transfusion can result in death too.

“I understand where you’re coming from. I’m scared of what could go wrong as well. However, I don’t need to say what would happen if we do nothing, right?”

I would surely die in that case.
In this situation I’ve no choice but to take the gamble.

“No matter why, currently Master’s magic is draining steadily. However, if he could be supplied with magic at the same rate…”
“Even were it possible in theory, there is way of knowing I can perform it properly! For example, what wouldst happen were I to exceed the maximum amount of power? If I… I could possibly kill him in such a way…”
“There’s no choice but to believe in you.”

Lily said so with a very light voice.
She was pretending to be calm on the surface.
Only the finger that still remained in my mouth trembled lightly.

“At the very least I think you’re the one most suited for this. Besides, with the amount of magical energy you possess you should be able to keep it up continuously I think.”

Controlling 2 attributes of magic in addition to healing magic, Lily is certainly very skilled at controlling magic, but she can’t keep casting her healing magic on me continuously. Moreover, she doesn’t have the large amount of magic that Gerbera has. Although Rose can create a lot of magic power she’s not as good at controlling it and Kato is completely out of the question.
Like Lily has been saying since the beginning, Gerbera is probably the only one who can pull it off.

However.
Hypothetically speaking, How many people would cut into the belly of a wounded person even if they know not doing anything would spell death?

Let alone if this person is an important companion.

If you the person is important to you it’d be very hard to keep calm and collected. It’s obvious that mistakes are made when you’re not calm. It’s the same reasoning that cause physicians to hesitate to operate on relatives.

“Fo, for one such as I to…”

possibly get me killed…
Obviously when thinking of something like that one would lose the will to move.

Yeah, it’s obvious.
Then why didn’t Lily expect it to end up this way?

…There’s no way she didn’t plan for this.

“Please, Gerbera.”

Lily, who was looking straight at Gerbera, slowly lowered her head deeply.

“I’m aware you’re afraid of hurting Master. I understand this act may take Master’s life. I’m well aware how cruel then this request is. Nonetheless, I want to entrust this task to you.”

Although she fully understood the circumstances, Lily lowered her head anyway.
What could compel her to do such a thing has already left her mouth.

“Please Gerbera. Help our Master.”
“Lily-dono…”

Gerbera stared intently at Lily.

The fear of hurting me was evident within her eyes, but when the flaxen hair on Lilly’s lowered head got reflected in her pupils the fear gradually melts away.

Gerbera was fearful of solitude by nature and her feelings of ‘wanting to become a comrade’ are unusually strong.
Lily’s sincere words had a large effect on her because of that.

Finally, the weakness left Gerbera’s noble features and were replaced by a strong will.
Slowly, her long white hair swung up and down.

“…Understood.”
“Gerbera!”

Lily raised her head with a joyful voice.
Gerbera replied with a clumsy smile on her gentle face.

“Leave it to me.”

The crouching spider unfolded her legs.
Gerbera got up and started moving towards me on 8 legs.
3 meters. 2 meters.
The distance between us had disappeared.

“…”

However, what was supposed to be a resolute gait suddenly turned a little clumsy.
The cause of this was obvious.

“…Rose-dono”

Although she should have calmed down now, Gerbera’s fear suddenly rose up again.

Since Rose is so devoted to me it’s only natural that she would object.
What would she think at this important point, what would she say. Gerbera probably can’t help but think about such things.

As expected.

“…What are you doing?”

Rose asked with featureless face.

“Please share your magic with Master quickly.”
“Eh?”

Gerbera let out a foolish voice.
Without understanding what was just said she blinked a few times.
She must feel anti-climactic after putting her guard up.

I felt the same way.

“Wouldst that be all right?”
“Would what be?”
“Doth thee not distrust me?”
“…”

Rose kept silent at this question.
She didn’t seem to be displeased but rather looked like she was thinking about what to say.

But Rose wasn’t silent for very long.
Perhaps she had been thinking about her relationship with Gerbera all the time up till now.

“Lily-anesama said the same thing earlier, so I’m just repeating it. Or rather, I’ll go back to something we discussed before that.”

Rose prefaced her argument like that.

“Earlier, you said that Master got hurt because of you. Isn’t that right?”
“a, aye…”
“My apologies to Lily-anesama for saying so, but I agree.”

Gerbera looked like she was about to cry from Rose’s gaze.
It seemed like she thought Rose would never accept her.

But, she was jumping to a conclusion.

“However, the same could be said about me.”

Like this, Rose continued.

“No. In fact my own responsibility weighs far more heavily. I couldn’t approve of you. I couldn’t accept you. My frank honesty and my obstinacy has led to these circumstances.”
“N,No. Even my lord believed thou wouldst not approve of me.”
“Be that as it may, This is the result and I can’t make excuses for that. At the very least, condemning you would be barking up the wrong tree. Stubbornly causing another mistake despite all this would be mere foolishness.”

after saying this much, Rose shook her head.

“No, that’s still somewhat deceptive. I need to convey it without killing my heart.”

Rose looked like she convinced herself. She turned her face to Kato who still had her hand on her shoulder and then looked back at Gerbera again.

“Gerbera. I won’t be able to come to like you. Due to a ‘certain event’ I’ve somehow come to understand what you were trying to accomplish a little. Because I too have something I must accomplish, now I can appreciate where you’re coming from. That doesn’t change that I have poor compatibility with you though. That Master got injured because of such reasons, even now I remember the anger I have for you. However…”

It seemed like Rose took a brief moment to turn her attention to the feelings inside her, and told Gerbera how she

really felt.

“Nevertheless, you are my little sister.”
“Rose-dono…”

Gerbera’s red eyes went wide.

“In the same way I’m also the sister of Lily-anesama. It’s not like I feel I need to accept you just because Master accepted you, but rather that the feelings of wanting to accept you as a sister aren’t entirely absent within me.”

Rose, who usually kills off her own emotions, is now dealing with her complicated feelings towards Gerbera… when I think about it this might be the first time for that to happen.

Coincidentally, there existed an easy to understand phrase with which a compromise between the two could be expressed.

“Regarding Master, please let’s get along well”

Lowering her head, Rose withdrew her body as though yielding the way to Gerbera.

Maybe a chance for the two of them to compromise like this was necessary. That this chance had to take this form can only be called particularly rotten luck.

There is no doubt however that the two were able to resolve some of the ill feelings between them. I should consider that a blessing at least.

“My lord”

Like that Gerbera came up to my bedside.
There was no weakness apparent on her face.
I understood that Lily’s and Rose’s words supported her back.

“Please, entrust thine body to me.”

White threads were hanging from all five of her fingers on both hands.
Various places all over my body were connected with her fingers.

“I shall begin.”

Saying so, Gerbera began flowing magic energy through the spider threads.
From her sleek fingers a white radiance appeared, which flowed down the threads and circulated throughout my body.
The thing that previously felt lacking, as if flowing out of me now felt like it was being compensated for.
My whole body trembled. It was the first time I’ve ever really experienced the true feeling of magical energy.

Gerbera was immersed in her work with the expression of sincerity itself.
Lily and Rose watched over her in response to the hope they put into their gamble.

…I’m sure it’ll be fine, now.

Just as I thought that, I lost the tension in my body.
Drowsiness closed in on my consciousness like surging waves.
Without being able to see it through till the end, I finally lost my awareness.

Elf Tensei: Chapter 2, Episode 6 (V2C6)
Takami no Kago Chapter 23
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Master of Monsters Vol 2 Chapter 9 ~ Way of the master

By Fairy 28th February 2016

~~It's 1am here. I am too tired to type anything else. Will update in the next 24 hours.~~
Well, It's like what Reihunter had said in the comments. Locked out of access. When we finally got access, the work is ._____.

I thought that it will be just some TLC and translating of a few pages. Boy, I was wrong. In the end, I redid almost everything.
Table Flipping. (╯°□°）╯ ┻┻

TL: Fairy, Egads, Solpower + the first guy who tried.
Editor: Onionrings
TLC: Fairy

Since this is a priority, I sort of push back all my other schedule.Sorry for the delays. I will try to get Alice out in 24 hours.

This should be a one off chapter from me. Fluttering eye lashes will not work on me.

So, here is the chapter
09. ご主人様の在り方 – 09. Way of the master

It was the next day that I woke up.

Fortunately, the continuous decrease of my magic power has stabilized after a day. It is not certain since the cause of the phenomenon was unclear to begin with, but it seems I can be relieved for the time being.

From what I heard, Gerbera was at my side the whole time giving me magic power until my condition stabilized. Even with Gerbera's persistent stubbornness, she endured the task of providing me magical power through sheer willpower. After ensuring my safety, she passed out and fell asleep.
Speaking of which, she did mention she was poor at treatment of magic power.

I have really troubled her.

「Good work today」

When I patted her white head, her spider legs made a grinding sound.*Kichikichi*
I was charmed by the smile which appeared on her soft pretty face which was that of a person who had completed their task.

＊ ＊ ＊

「We were saved this time.」

I called out to Lily who was in the rear.
The two of us moved to a small room installed in the Arachne's nest.
It was a『bathroom』built by Rose whilst we were away. Even though it was only 『a partitioned space with a bucket wide enough for a person to enter』.
In an isolated place with nobody else.

It has been a long time since Lily and I got our alone time.

「Although it is related to my treatment, I was saved despite the issue with Gerbera. If Lily was not around, what would have happened… Sorry for the trouble we put you through.」

「It's ok, there's no such thing.」

Lily responded to my apology with a wry smile and she sat in front of me and *JAKIRI* cut my hair with the scissors Rose made.

After a month of surviving in the wild, my hair has gotten longer. A portion of it however is uneven due to it getting burned from the fireball of a Balloon Fox.

I asked Lily to trim the hair back evenly. After all, I am fine even if I were to have it cut at a cheap barber shop. Letting an amateur cut it won't leave any dissatisfaction. As long as it is not ugly, I am fine with it.

「Although I had said it previously, I am everyone's older sister. So that's just a natural thing for me to do.」

「Is that so? That reminded me, you had said that previously.」

「Rather, I want you to praise Rose. In that way, it's unexpected that Garbera can be accepted that easily.」

「Ah, I thought it would take more time. Possibly, I was worried the relationship between the two would break because Gerbera didn't manage to protect me.」

「I also had the same opinion. I thought that child would be more stubborn. However, Rose has also thought about Gabera in her own way, right?」

「Yeah, you are right.」

「Certainly, Gerbera had also worked hard. She definitely fought bravely until now. 」

While chatting, the hair cut by Lily fell to my towel covered waist.

In this way, with me being semi nude, I can consider taking this opportunity to wash off all the dirt and sweat from my body while washing off the cut hair.

Lily is my attendant for when I take a bath.

Because my body doesn't move really well yet.

This is simply weakening from a lack of physical strength, rather than a side effect of the magic received from Gerbera.

Anyway, I feel heavy and my body doesn't move properly.

Fortunately, as for now, there are no other ill symptoms. There is no particular pain apart from the burn mark on my arm and the faint scar which remained when the metal seed vine's gun seed was taken out.

However, it might be possible that I have yet to be aware of the bad condition of my body. I must take note of the unknown reason of the loss of magic.

「That's right. I was saved by Gerbera. Lily and Rose too. It seems everyone has grown up before I knew it…」

Listening to the scissors making the smart snipping sounds, I reflexively leaked out a sigh.

「I did not notice it at all… This is proof that my vision has become narrowed.」

「That probably can't be helped.」

After evening up my hair, Lily began to *Shaki Shaki* fix the hair points with the scissors.

「My Master, I wish to know how important we are to you. The discord between Rose and Gerbera is a great problem for Master. Since it is important, the bigger the discord between Rose and Gerbera, the more issues for Master. Putting in effort only to see it for naught, I think it is normal for humans..」

「Oh, please close your eyes Master.」

When the haircut was finished, Lily began to draw water and started washing my hair.

Slender fingers tussle my hair and tickled my scalp. Water was poured on top of my head and flowed along my chin to the floor.
I kept talking while closing my eyes.

「It may be as Lily says.」

「Yes?」

「The talk about rushing to put in effort which ended up fruitless.」

Thinking back on it, I consider the situation whereby we met the enemy balloon for the first time. The careless behaviour that I exhibited which lead to us facing a group of them suddenly, is probably due to my bearing an impatient attitude at that point in time.

「I was somehow very impatient and ended up nearly dying. On the contrary, due to me not being able to solve the discord between Gerbera and Rose, I am able to conclude the gap/misunderstanding between Gerbera and Rose.」

After Lily cleansed my body, I submerged into the water in the tub.
Though it would be better if there was hot water, being clean is good enough.
However, the pleasure of taking a bath is halved.

「It's pathetic. Even though I'm your leader…」

Is it because my feelings loosened a little?The whine that should be kept deep in my chest was let out.
「At any time, there is no room for doubt and I am driven to the wall worrying about everyone. The plan I have is full of holes . I do not have the power to solve your problems. 」

On the brink of death due to my rapid loss of magic power, the spectacle of everything nearly coming to naught played out in front of me and I thought 『Why did it turn out to be like this?』
If you try to reconsider the chain of events that happened, the answer is clear
That is because I'm incompetent.

Lily said that my impatience and fruitless effort was 『Ordinary』.
However, being the norm is no good. This is because I am the Master of Monsters.
It is due to me not having sufficient ability, which ended up with such mistakes and failures. Thanks to Lily and everyone, we were able to overcome this danger.
This is nothing but an afterthought. It doesn't change the fact that there is nothing that I can do.
They are certainly growing at the moment. But, I am still useless for now.

「Being impatient, moving around aimlessly. There is nothing I can do. There is nothing that I can obtain. 」

I let out a heavy sigh and feel depressed.

「Truly deplorable」
Fairy: He is scolding himself

「Master…」

Lily embraced and carried me into the bathroom, who is unable to exert any strength into my body, and peered into my eyes as I am.

She quietly gazed at me with her big eyes.
When I looked at her questioningly, she cast her eyes downwards.
It seems she's thinking about something. I wonder what's she's thinking about… I am unable to read her mind using the monster family link.

Lily looked up.
A smile as if flowers are blooming spreads throughout her face.

「As for that, I guess it can't be helped. 」

Those are kind comforting words…. or not.
There is a strange aura behind her smile

「Li-Lily…」

I felt unease and unconsciously started stepping back. But the place I am in right now is in the so-called big pail and there is no escape.
I wanted to pretend that I did not notice it but unfortunately, there exists an monster family link. between us. Lily's highly strung feeling leaked out to me. In addition, she did not intend on hiding it.

「Master, as for me. Okay. I am very angry about this incident.」

Lily with a look of protest stood up from her kneeling posture and moved closer towards me.
Without consideration of the water in the pail as she moved towards me. Her jersey got wet and she does not seem to care about it.
When I try to bend my upper body backwards, she pushes me down. With her slender arms that have strength far above that of a normal girl, she seized both my arms in order to not let me escape.

「Why don't you consult with me? Why do you hold it in yourself? Why are we not relied on?」

「Didn't rely on you? What are you talking about? There is no such thing, is there?」

「Are you saying that I misunderstood?」

I nodded and protested.

「Without you guys, I would already be in a monster's stomach. As expected, even I understand this. 」
「I didn't think of it. Uhm… Yes, isn't it? That's right, isn't it? 」

Lily nodded easily.
A bittersweet smile floated on her face.

「It is as Master has said. Master will not view us as unreliable, right? 」

With a smile that looks slightly sad, Lily said to me.

「However, you don't rely on us.」

「…」

「Although Master has thought of us as『Reliable Companions』, I'd rather be『Companions to rely on.」

「…」

I couldn't find any word of denial this time.
It is an unmistaken fact that I turned down Lily with all my might.
It's the same for Rose and Gerbera. Same goes for the issue with Kato-san. Although I was pampered by Gerbera once, since it became like that, I had somehow deceived them at first.. As for other minor details, my visual problem has also been kept silent.

I went through the problem alone without relying on my friends that should be reliable.
If pointed out, it is clear I have such a character.
However, it is just my excuse.

「I have a role to lead you guys. This is one of the liabilities of the role.」

I am the Master of Lily and Co.
If there are family problems/squabbles among the girls, I, as a Master, must solve them.
The problems that arise from me, naturally I will solve them myself.
That is, no matter how imperfect, the duty of the leader leading the group.
Aside from lamenting my lack of strength, there is nothing wrong with my stance itself.
That should have been so.

「That's wrong.」

But Lily shook her flaxen-haired head.

「Why won't you understand? Taking on this and that and each and everything on your own, failing is a matter of course.」
「Like I said, that's due to my lack of strength」

「What's wrong with lacking strength? To compensate for that, aren't we the Family here?」

Receiving Lily's slightly upturned eyes appealing to me, I was being startled.
Unable to hold back the unstable emotions in herself, her eyes wavered like ripples on a lake surface.
It held enough destructive power to cause what small amount of pride I held in myself to waver violently.

「That is of course something even I know of, you know? That master's personality is one with a strong sense of responsibility. A self-punishing personality is also present in you. I know very well. I do, but…」

Tears spilled over and fell in large drops from Lily's eyes.

「Taking on things, is already something that cannot be helped but… …rely on us a little.」

「Lily…」

I suddenly remembered.
During the time when I returned in a tattered state after getting caught perfectly in the balloon fox's trap,
Upon seeing me, although at first Lily showed an upset expression, after that she treated me based on her own judgement until the end.

Although if it was the Lily I know, it wouldn't be strange even if she panicked.
She hadn't shown any tears.
Even so that does not equal 『Lily became able to not feel anything』
Under a resolute mask, she had been suppressing her agitated self. To borrow her own words, she conducted herself『fittingly as an eldest daughter』. Until this moment, she has been enduring it.
But now, here it was only the two of us.
There isn't a reason for Lily to act strong as an elder sister.

「I was scared. That maybe Master would die…」

Lily who suppressed her agitated self and accomplished her responsibility as an elder sister, is no longer the girl from when we just met, from when she had just consumed Mizushima Miho and obtained her girl form.

Change has definitely paid a visit
And for what purpose?
I don't know is something I won't say even if my mouth was torn apart.
That's obviously because, like she herself said, it is for the sake of 『Supporting me』.

However being the crux of the group, I not relying on her, her devotion was not rewarded.
Even Rose and Gerbera, In order to support me, they have been working hard in respective ways.

I had intended to do my best, but I probably made a mistake somewhere. The tears spilling over in front of me is proof of that.
In any case, now is not a good situation to abandon myself to regret.
I have other things to do. This time, I cannot afford to make a mistake.

「I'm sorry…」

Extending my hands towards the crying Lily, I embraced her.
Lily didn't resist. Instead she threw herself to me.
As I hugged her tightly, her sobbing leaked out from within my arms. I once again thought "I really made her anxious".

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We remained snuggled together for a while.
It was a strangely calming period. If it could be this calm, I could have undoubtedly remained indifferent to that failure.
Before long, the sound of sniffing *SunSun* disappeared.

「This is something I'm saying from consulting Mizushima Miho's memories but…」

Having seemed to have calmed down, Lily spoke.

「There are various type of leaders」

「Types?」

Lily nodded.
With her bangs rubbing against my chest, it was slightly ticklish.

「Such as Powerful types that lead others along forcefully, or those that are a charisma-type that charms others……」

「Both don't apply to me」

I let out a wry smile.

「Un. That's right」

Lily also didn't venture to deny my words.

「だけどね、ご主人様。そんな人たちに、わたしたちはついて行きたいと思わないんだよ」

「But Master. I don't think we would want to follow those types of people」

「…」

「『Never being composed, being cornered by personal worries, the plans I think of are full of holes. I don't have the power to solve everyone's problems』was it? Just now, didn't Master say something like that. But you know……」

Lily gazed up at me from below.

「Always remaining composed, never worrying about anything, being able to solve any problems, a leader with the power to save everything reflected in his eyes. That is just some sort of an ideal」

Returning my own lamentation, clearly showing me the Image I held of 『As the leader of the girls' family, the me that I should be/must be』, and Lily expressed that as an 『Ideal/Dream』.

「If such a person really existed, I think it would be a very wonderful person. But that is just the fairytale hero that everyone dreams of. Denying something like that is something that is impossible to do.」

Lily slowly shook her head.

「But you see, even if there was such a person, we don't think we would want to follow him. After all, that's not『You』」

In the eyes of lily who said that, the me who was lost in her words is reflected.

Right here, right now, she was firmly gazing at me.

「The one I like is not some ideal person. He is not someone being drawn from my ideal form. I can't like something that is just an illusion. I like the Master that tries to do something for us, even if lacking power or something, trying desperately for us. Whether he has sufficient power or not, it doesn't matter at all.」

「……but, I'm your Master, as the leader I can't be a burden. As such I can't be so powerless right?」
「There is no such thing」

Lily pressed and rubbed her flaxen head into my chest.

「Then conversely, if we were useless would Master abandon us?」

「No way!」

I denied that immediately.

「No way, that is impossible!」

「……Un. If it was Master, I thought it would be like that. Fufu. As one of the Family, being happy here is no good

but..」

A bittersweet smile floated on the face of Lily who had raised her face.

「But, I'm happy.」

Lily gently clasped my cheeks with both hands.

「But Master, That this is the same for us, is something I want you to understand.」

Lily's palm affectionately stroked my cheek.

「Let us support you. Rely on us more. Don't do the impossible alone. It's fine to lack power. Us Family are useless creatures unless we join forces but… Master is definitely also the same…」

「I'm also… the same?」

「Un. Isn't that surely, the way that Master and us Family are supposed to be.」

The way we are supposed to be.
The words that Lily spoke, I have never thought of that until now. That is because, to me, that was something I hadn't tried to think about.
There was no need to think about it, it was because I was under such an impression.
I thought that I must lead them along.
I had decided that was the way it had to be.
However, originally that was not something to be unequivocally decided.

As Lily said earlier, there are various ways of being a leader. Taking into account the leader's own personality and the nature of the group, there is no choice but to individually look for ways to become better.
I had been neglecting something so obvious.

And thinking about it, it was not that Lily said anything wild. Instead she did nothing more than point out the blatantly obvious.

Certainly if someone is as charismatic as god, have the power to lead others along, and have the intelligence to resolve any and everything, there is nothing that can surpass that.
But I am nothing except a normal student you can find anywhere. It's vexing but that is the me right now. The seventeen year old me known as Majima Takahiro. That is something I myself cannot deny.

On that fated day, on the border of life and death in that cave, awakening the power I possessed, I suddenly became the master leading Lily and the rest of the family.
However, even so nothing about me changed.
Without any preparation, a brat that could be found anywhere like me, there was no way to be able to display the nature of a stereotypical leader.

Even still trying to act as a 『Splendid leader』, overdoing it somewhere is a matter of course.

——I have to somehow do it.
——I will resolve it all.

Thinking those things……was in a sense conceited.

Looking at me, there were those who helped me.
Those who said they want to support me.
Joining hands with them, focusing on the same goal, proceeding on while cooperating.

Probably, what I should be aiming at, is that.

If it is us now, we should be able to do that.
That is because, having become aware of my own inexperience and limits, accepting them I can now take measures. Even Lily and the others, they were by no means weak existences that need to be lead by me.

「All of us will combine our power. Live by supporting each other. If that was the way that we were originally supposed to be…I've been mistaken the whole time…」

Because of this, this is the new starting point for me and the girls.
Strangely, same as that time in that cave, alone with Lily in a small space, I embraced a new determination in my chest.
Everyone helping each other, let's survive in this other world.
The power that dwells in my body is for that sake after all.

「Thank you, Lily. Thanks to you I came to my senses.」

To the precious Lily who taught me that, putting in my flood of emotions, I thanked her.

「From now on I will be relying on you. Please support me.」

「Un…Unn. Master!」

Seeming to be overcome with emotion, Lily hugged my body tightly.
Once again I hugged her in return,
Our faces moved naturally, closing even closer from the already close distance, we smiled at each other.
Our bodies came into contact through the texture of the wet jersey. Not enough. Not enough at all. Hugging as to fill the gaps, the path informed me of Lily's desire.
That was, the same as what I am desiring now.

「Master…」

Linking our eyes, the tips of our noses touching, our lips met like we were trying to suck each other in.
I suddenly thought that it's been awhile since we were 『alone together』.
Well that doesn't mean anything in particular.
I'm so satisfied I can't move anyway.

Embracing Lily who wrapped her arms behind my head, exchanging a kiss with her, feeling her abundant bulge through the soaking wet material of the jersey, as I thought that——

「Ow」

——at the pain that ran through the back of my left hand, I gave a small cry of pain.

「Ah. Sorry」

At the voice I leaked out, Lily separated from me.
Seeming to think she had put a burden on my body, her fine eyebrows lowered.

「No. It's not that Lily did anything」

As I straightened my body that had curled up in surprise to the pain, I waved my hand at her.

「For some reason my hand suddenly hurt……」

As I began saying that, I was startled

「What's wrong…」

Lily's words also cut off in the middle.

The speechless her stared. At the back of my left hand where I felt the pain just now.

There, an emerald green protrusion had grown.
A small amount of red blood flowed from the edge of the growth. This is probably the cause of the pain. Drop by drop, it fell into the water the bath tub and diluted.
The emerald green protrusion, was even now energetically growing rapidly.
The I finally realised, that was the seedling of a plant.

In such an abnormal situation, there was no way it was just an ordinary seedling. At the tip, like a snake raising its neck, a head with no eyes or nose and only a mouth appeared.

「M, aS, Ter」

……It spoke.

Although the pronunciation was awkward and creaky, that was certainly the call of a monster of the Family yearning for me as a master.
To be at a loss of words is this huh.
Why would 『a monster grow out of my body』. I don't understand. Since when did such an omen…

「Ah…」

That my blanked head had arrived at 『that truth』might be something miraculous.
I called out to Lily who seems to be dumbfounded like me.

「Naa, Lily」

「Whaat, Master」

「Do you have any memory of extracting a Gun Vine's seed from my left hand?」

The place I was first shot by a seed, was the back of my left hand.
Since it was such a violent scene, that remembering it almosts makes me feel unwell, that memory was left vividly in my brain.
And, during the operation where the seeds were being dug out of me, there is no memory of a seed being extracted from my left hand.
Since my consciousness was hazy at that time, I thought it was just that I don't remember it, but when Lily who carried out that operation shook her head sideways, that possibility disappeared.

Which means… …that, probably.

「By any chance, my magic power being exhausted, is because of this guy?」

I almost died due to lack of magic power.
The Gun Vine is a parasitic monster.
Absorbing nutrients from its host could be said to be its way of life.

「No. But, at most that is for trees. Something nonsensical like growing from a person's body…」

「Ah. Wait, Master. That is a bit wrong.」

Lily interrupted my words.

「The attack method of Gun Vines is similar to how lilies shoot out seeds from their flowers right? It is something obvious but, seeds are usually a method of reproduction, not a method of attack」

「Maa, that's right」

「And yet why do you think Gun Vines shoot out seeds like bullets?」

Once questioned, it does seem to be a weird phenomenon. Based on my knowledge relating to living things, to create seeds or fruits should be an event that requires a lot of energy. To use that as a disposable method of attack, in the end is that possible?

As I pondered without having an response, Lily told me the answer.

「The reason why Gun Vines use seeds as a method of attack, is because it is part of their life cycle.This type of plants like Gun Vines, will shoot the prey to death and absorb the nutrients to germinate.I to date had seen many cases of this before. 」

「So, growing from my body is not impossible?」

Thinking of vegetation growing from my corpse like caterpillar fungus, I shivered.
If not for Gerbera giving me magic power, I would have been sucked dry and died already. This situation is in the end nothing more than the result of her haphazard ability…
「Besides, in this first place is this really a Gun Vine?」

「What do you mean?」

「Isn't the shape and appearance entire different」

Now that it was mentioned, it seems so. This thing before me seems to differ slightly from the standard shape of Gun Vines.
The greatest difference is probably the lack of Lily-like flowers blooming. Like this, it is unable to fulfill its function as a Gun Vine. If that is that case, this is——

「——the same a Lily. A Unique Monster」

An extremely rare occurrence of a mutated species among monsters.
The monster lodged in me, just happens to be one of those.
Could such a coincidence even occur.

If thought about like that, the reverse way of thinking fits much more.

「It's because it lodged in me, that this guy germinated as a Unique Monster……?」

My body, even if provisionally, is that of a cheat ability wielder. Like killing a dragon with a single punch, the same as a jack-in-the-box that overturns logic. No matter what happens it wouldn't be strange.

「… Well if we embedded some other seed into my body once again, we would be able to make it clear…」

「Don't say stupid things. This time time you will die for sure.」

「Yeah」

There is no guarantee I could live after doing it a second time. Even Garbera would probably be against a second time. There was no way I could propose something that would be throwing dirt on her hard work, it was obviously a joke.

「So, Master, what do we do about this?」

Shooting a glare at me who said a bad joke, Lily inquired.
With the right hand where there is no parasitic monster growing, I scratched my hair which had become somewhat shorter.

「What to do… …tearing it off is probably not an option.」

I can clearly feel the path with this parasitic monster, and that it has no hostility is being transmitted to me.

「Mas, T, eR! tEr!」
Maybe because it was just born, it doesn't seem to be very intelligent. It also doesn't seem able to say anything other than call to me.
But, even so I could understand it innocently adores me. Pulling it out and killing it is an act that would cause considerably strong stabbing feelings of guilt.

Besides, thinking about it, the one who shot seeds into my body was the Gun Vine that was this one's mother, in the end this guy just germinated.
Even if the mother tried to kill me, it is not the fault of the child that was born. The situation might be slightly different, but that way of thinking was not impossible.

「From what can be seen, the condition seems stable, there is also no reason to have to try to kill it… In the first place, can this guy even be torn off.」

Its roots seem to spread in my body but how deeply it has taken root is unknown. If done poorly, there maybe a need to chop off my arm. The risk for that is too high.

When such thought are being conveyed to it or not, a creaking sound rang out in protest.

「Goshuji, MaSta! Goshu, Sama! Sama!」

「I understand I understand. I will not peel you off.」

「Is this okay? Goshujin-sama?」

At Lily's question, I shrugged my head.

The feeling of being parasitized by something which tried to kill is delicate but if you were to think about it, the story/experience about Gerbera is also about the same.

… And, because I had thought about that.

「Thy Lord! Thy Lord, Where art thou!」

Speak of the devil.
Along with Gerbera's voice, I can heard flurried movements.

「… What is it this time?」
There is Gerbera's presence who is searching for me at the other side of the wall.

「Thou art over there , thy Lord!」

After walking to and fro, she seems to deduce my location and her peculiar walking sound started moving towards our direction.
「thy Lord！」

Ban with a huge noise, the door was thrown open.

With fluttering white hair, Gerbera entered the 『Bathroom』. It appears somehow or another that she just woke up since there are some disarranged bed hair.
When her presence comes before our very eyes, Lily and I hug each other absentmindedly
Just that, Gerbera's appearance is now in a state of shock.

「Gerbera」

I inquired.

「There is something riding on your head, isn't it?」

Riding on top of her white hair which made people believe that it's spider's silk, there is a beast drained of energy.
It's tail swelled and it's pointed ears are triangular.
The round and *fuwafuwa*(fluffy) and soft light reddish brown fur on it's body. No matter how you see it, it gives off an atmosphere as if it just borned only a few months ago.
Opening it's mouth, sharp and small cute teeth are exposed. When it breathes in, the body which was sitting on my palm expanded.
The body who completely expanded like a balloon shrinked and thin smokes are being puffed out from his mouth (and rising into the air)

There is no mistaking this.

「Balloon Fox」

「……'s kid. Gerbera. Where did you pick this up?」

When Lili took my question from my mouth and inquired, the balloon fox which belched and lost it's balance making Gerbera flustered, and Gerbera stopped moving immediately.

「I did not pick it up. A little while back, it came along.」

「It came along…」
「From the place where thy Lord almost died till here, it is a considerable distance. It's probably not weird for the fox cub to travel here by foot in 1 day.」

Looking at it closely, this fox's fur is also very dirty.
During the time my life is hanging by a thread, this child fox probably faced great danger as well.

「So, why is that thing riding on Gerbera's head?」

「I don't know. Don't ask me. Ask this brat.」

「No, it's okay to take it down.」

「Thinking if I were to touch it, it will break down. Such a possibility might exist.」

Unthinkable! Gerbera who look at me with eyes which seem to not have faith in me. Tentatively, it seems like she has forgotten that this fox cub is a monster.
With an atmosphere where I can't say anything, I gazed at Gerbera. Then, Rose and Kato-san both turned up and

peek inside.

「Master, did something happen? …Oh?」

「For some reason it became something troublesome didn't it.」

With a fox kit riding atop Gerbera's head, looking at the parasitic plant growing on the back of my hand, the girls look wide eyed.
In a blink of an eye the bath became completely lively.

「Master」

Inside the arm, Lili begins to stir/moved.
I read her intention and let go of her hand, this causes her to give out a bitter smile.

「Somehow, it didn't turn into『That kind of mood』, right…」

「… That's right isn't it.」

I also return a bitter smile. With it being just the two of us for a while, it seems like that time was over. It was a little disappointing.

「Master？」

「Yes？　…Ah. Thank you.」

Lily who was standing up, to help me stand/get out reached out with her hand.
When taking her hand, Lily put on a happy expression out of nowhere.

「But, isn't that okay.」

「？ What is that you're saying?」

「Master was saying something like『Impatiently, Fruitlessly, Not able to do anything. Not being able to obtain anything.』.」

Lili tilted her head to me and she greeted me with an earnest smile.

「It wasn't meaningless for Master and Ganbera doing their best you know.」

And like that, we ended up adding our friends getting the fourth and fifth member added to our family.

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(R18) Frequenting Brothels 1
About these ads

10. The Scenery I Wish To Protect

Synopsis of previous chapter:

Fluffy!

Chapter 10

I, who was to rest for several more days, in order to effectively use the time to fully recover, was to be provided with the opportunity to discuss our future plans with my companions.

Our next direction… In other words, to stay here or to search for human civilization to the 『North』, or we could aim to join up with the First Expedition Unit to the 『East』.

“Shouldn’t we head towards civilization? Fortunately, with Gerbera’s testimony, we know that humans exist in this world as well as the direction to exit this forest.”

Lily supports the notion of exiting the forest to the north.

“Considering Master’s body, I think that it is better to resupply our goods as soon as we can.”

Up to this point, it is the same as what I thought. However, Lily had a slightly different outlook as well.

“Master has received several severe injuries up till now, hasn’t he? In order to heal, plenty of rest and consumption of nourishing food is required. However, it is hard to get our hands on what we require. I’m worried that one day we’ll not be able to do so.”

Lily pointed out the fact that my body has actually become thinner than before.

Even though I wasn’t aware of it myself—for her who constantly hugs me—it seems that she’s more sensitive to the minute changes of my body more than I am.

Perhaps due to depending on the benefits of recovery magic, it has crept up on me without me

noticing it. For now, I can cover it up, but there is a limit to how long I can continue doing so.
I have been slow since I was knocked down. On no accounts would I be baggage to Lily and the others, my real intention was to feign it.

Rose and Gerbera supported her opinion after hearing what Lily pointed out.
What's left to think about would be the matter regarding Kato-san.

However, the person in question, Kato-san herself asserted that we should set out towards the east.
Even if we head to the east, it is not definite that we will meet up with the Expedition Unit. That was her opinion and it was quite a reasonable point.

Thus we settled on heading towards the north. What's left is just to decide on when to set off.
Even if I deliberately discussed this with Lily and the others, in the end the job of making the final decision was left to me.

The day to depart is near.
I prepared my mind and body for the coming of that day.

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That day's evening, when the weariness of my body finally faded away.
I took Lily out with me to the exit of the Arachne's nest.

In that dark and gloomy forest, the vague silhouette of the sunset resembled the dissolving spill of ink to one's eyes.

In order to ascertain the condition of my body, I rotated my shoulder several times and my line of sight fell on the finger of my left hand.

"Now, let's start the test. Can you do it, Asarina?"

"Goshuu, sama!"

Answering with a voice like the creaking of several trees, Rifle Vine, or rather, Parasitic

Vine—whose name we came up with after discussing with Kato-san, *Asarina*—extended from top of my finger of my left arm.
The figure looked as if it was a snake rushing out from a burrow. Stretching itself out swiftly, it ascertained its target.

“Go!”

The green snake shot its body out on my command.
5 meters of its front end that was stretched out pierced through a bundle of wood that was right in front of me.
Splinters of tree bark and leaves scattered about simultaneously with a ringing sound, followed by the dull resonance of a hard object sinking into its trunk.

“Guu… Alright, return.”

I made Asarina return, enduring while clenching my teeth as a burden came over and hung from my wrist to shoulder.

Confirming the course of events from beginning to the end, the targeted wood trunk had a 2 cm wide and 3 cm deep hole burrowed in it.

“That’s not bad.”

Satisfied with the results, I nodded and caressed Asarina whose head was waving from side to side while loosely coiled around the armor of my left arm, with the finger of my right hand.

“Goshuu, shu, shu, sama! Sama!”

Asarina cannot utilize bullets like a normal Rifle Vine. This is because she does not possess the organ that makes it possible.

I still don’t know if it is something that would develop as she matures or if this is a sign that she is a new species, a deviant of a Rifle Vine.

It’s a pity that she cannot use the bullets of her kind but in exchange, Asarina had stronger powers of maneuverability compared to Rifle Vines. Her extremely flexible body is capable of movements like that of a whip, to lash out in a straight line with an intense strike like she did just now.

Is it possible to be intercepted or separated from each other…? I was merely worrying about those thoughts, but I already knew that those were needless anxieties.

In fact, before Asarina’s body would get cut into shreds, she would first grow her head out again. It could be said to be the disposition of a plant to have strong vitality.

The apex of the plant looks like the head of a snake but it is not as if the central nervous system is located there. If I had to say where it was, Asarina’s real body would be the root that is affixed on my left arm instead.

Because of that, there is a sense of discomfort when I move my left arm but I will probably get used to it eventually.

And so, Asarina, who has taken root in my hand normally sips at my magic little by little. It’s for sustaining her vitality and for the sake of using it as an energy source when combat breaks out in an emergency.

Now that Asarina is capable of thought, she is different from when she was in germination, she can now control the precise amount of magic she absorbs. For example, when my magic is low, she would absorb a small amount and when I have excess, she would absorb more accordingly.

From another point of view, Asarina's role can be called something like 'an external storage for my excess magical power that's unused'.

On the other hand, I cannot even draw out my own magical power, but she can use my magical power as fuel and aid me as as my fighting strength.

This was something momentous.

Because with this, I have finally received the power to survive a fight on my own—a seed of possibility that’s capable of doing that.

Of course, this is just Asarina's power. It isn't mine.

However, as long as we are not torn away from each other, there is no meaning in fighting as two separate people considering our current situation.

It's miserable to require relying on another's strength as usual, but it wouldn't help anyone if I was to be obstinate about it.

I must never be lectured by Lily to the point of tears ever again.

I'll just do what I can. Those are the honest thoughts of the current me.

"It seems that its power is something that we can hold expectations towards."

Lily who was watching while seated stood up and approached.

"What's left is to use the path to see how detailed of an order you can give… How is that faring?"

"Well, it still requires practice."

It probably wouldn't be able to make it in time if instructions are voiced out in the midst of a fight. Considerating that, being able to handle Asarina as if we are of one mind is an indispensable skill in combat.

For this purpose, I thought to myself; "Why don't I use the path?".

From what I know of the path until now, the closer the distance, the higher the transmission rate. I based this conjuncture from my past experiences; because when there is body contact, an abundant amount of information was exchanged—there shouldn't be a mistake about it.

In addition to that, if you have the intention of conveying what's inside you to the other party, we know that the contents of the information can be increased to a certain extent. For example, Lily's method to repel Gerbera when she was an enemy is an application of that.

Because Asarina has taken root in me, this can be said to be an insurmountable level of direct contact. What's left is nothing except to practice accurately transmitting instructions.

Of course, when my instructions are not able to make it in time, Asarina should have the judgement to act accordingly. In that sense, she doesn't just play the role of my weapon, but I expect her to work as a semi-automatic defense system as well.

"It would be good if it went well…"

While playing with Asarina with her finger, Lily spoke.

"It's a huge advantage to be allowed to be at Master's side at all times."

"Well, that's because it's physically impossible to be far in the first place."

Within my Family of Monsters, the combat ability Asarina possesses is in one of the lowest category.

It's likely that it's hard to even fight a head-on battle against one of the normal monsters.

But by constantly being with me, her low combat ability can be compensated for into an advantage. It is just as Lily has said.

However, what came out of Lily's mouth seems to be slightly off from what I thought.

"But… I see. To be always together with Master ah…"

Withdrawing her hand from playing with Asarina, Lily put her hands behind her back.

She, who was looking upwards at me, turned her lips into a slight pout.

"I… might be kind of jealous of that."

"…"

As casually as possible, Lily approached me as though it was nothing special at all.

Nevertheless, to the targeted person himself, it didn't seem to be enough to fool him.

Well, that's the way it is for a man and a woman who don't hold negative feelings towards each other in a relationship.

It's obvious to want to be together all the time. It's natural to find excuses just to stick with the other. It's not as if she's especially clingy.

…It's the same even for me. It's just that I am unable to say it out loud.

"It has gotten dark, huh. Since it seems like dinner would be done soon, shall we return?"

Startled by her cute gestures, I averted my eyes from her adorable sulking and suggested in a half-hearted tone.

"Seems like it. Master's sickness hasn't completely healed as well, it would not be good to overexert yourself."

Lily hugged my right arm tightly.

Even if I don't voice it out, the feelings of my embarrassment would be known to her. That is definitely not a bad feeling.

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When we returned to the nest, the preparations for dinner were done.

There were ingredients threaded on skewers that were hung over an open fire brightly burning in the sunken hearth that Lily made.

Today's menu is Big Scissors' meat. This is something that Gerbera hunted and brought back herself.

When I actually tried tasting it, the meat of Big Scissors were plainer in taste as I had expected. Although it's several times better than Fire Fang's meat in comparison.

It has only been grilled now but I don't have the feeling that it wouldn't be good if it was eaten raw with shoyu. Kato-san thought the same and started talking to Rose, who was still working, during the meal about Japan's sushi, sashimi and other trifling matters.

Lately, the scene of them chatting could often be seen.

While I was away, the two of them were always together. It could be that they had the opportunity to deepen their relationship.

There were other places where the scene was different from the past.

I gave thanks to Asarina as she stretched out her slender body to bite and retrieve a skewer of meat for me and looked to the person seated on my left, Gerbera.

The dangling short legs of a young fox cub that's lying on its belly can be seen on Gerbera's head. This as well, is something that's commonly seen recently.

"This… Ayame. Why hath Master adorned me so?"

'Ayame' is a young Balloon Fox that I named.

Looking up at Ayame on top of its head, Gerbera slightly furrowed her thin eyebrows as though she was troubled. Although it doesn't seem like Gerbera actually dislikes it. With the physical capabilities of a White Arachne, it should be a simple thing to seize the young Ayame. Since she did not do so, it's a simple thing to guess at what she's really thinking.

"Kuu—, kuu—."

"I would be troubled if thou crieth as if thou art displeased. I ought to complain instead of thou."

"Kuu."

“... What an irksome fellow.”

It seems that the young Ayame is fond of Gerbera and is more often found with her.
Although she fidgets around a lot and can’t keep still like a kid, by the time she realized it, she climbed Gerbera’s flat spider abdomen and reached the top of her white head.

Gerbera, despite being at a loss regarding Ayame’s actions, did not seem to harbor any negative thoughts towards her new sister’s existence at all.

“Muu. Could you be still for a while?”

While saying similar to that, Gerbera chased after Ayame to properly look after her.
Pleasant and ordinary scenes like that with Ayame as a set were shown to me.

Ayame, as though playing with Gerbera, ran around the inside of the nest.
And lastly, ran over to Rose’s side, who was talking to Kato-san.

“Oh my. What’s wrong, Ayame? That’s dangerous, you know.”

Rose was working as usual, while her right hand holds the knife, her left hand held the sword that she carved out. Folicking around under her arms is dangerous.
Disregarding Rose’s concern, while giving off a ku- ku- sound, Ayame laid down on her hard wooden knee.

“I guess it cannot be helped.”

Rose stopped her work in the middle and left the objects that were in her hands on the floor.
Her hands wavered a little, feeling lost before landing on Ayame’s head to stroke her stiffly.
Then, Gerbera who was chasing Ayame arrived.

“My apologies, Lady Rose. Ayame hath been a bother to thee.”

“No. I don’t really mind it.”

Ayame, whom Gerbera was looking at, laid her body down at the spot while being petted by Rose.

It appears that she wanted to be spoiled by the sister that she usually does not spend time with.

Gerbera stood still with a awkward expression.
Such a Gerbera looked at the expressionless face of Rose who continued to stroke Ayame.

“Cute isn’t she? Ayame.”

“A-aye.”

Gerbera nods and folded her eight legs.

“…”

“…“

WIth Ayame in the middle, Gerbera and rose sat next to each other.
Looking alternatively between them, Ayame swings her fluffy tail from side to side.

“…”

“…”

The two of them completely stiffened up without uttering anything.

“Kuu?”

Ayame tilted her head while Kato-san breathed a sigh.

“How about talking about something instead of looking at each other?”

Kato-san said with a exasperated tone after staring for a while.

“Look, Ayame. Since your two sisters look like they are going to converse, come over here.”

As Kato-san clicked her tongue, Ayame looked at both Rose and Gerbera before slipping through

Rose's hands and headed to her side.

The two people who were left behind exchanged glances with each other.
Now, it became a situation where neither of them can stand and leave without having a single conversation. Now that it has come to this, there is no choice but to accept it.

Above all, the youngest sister is watching the two of them intently with cute, black round eyes.

Aren't you going to chat?
Why are you still waiting?

…Such voices could almost be heard from gaze that is staring at them. One cannot help but to say that it's awkward.

"Did Master say anything about this?"

After several seconds of silence spent searching for a topic, The one who got the ball rolling was Rose, the elder sister.

"Combining my special skill in manufacturing magical tools and your weaving skills to make better armor?"

"Hou."

"I think that it is a good and valuable plan that is worth consideration. What about you?"

"Indeed. It is a good plan, I think so too. …What kind of things are you considering for example, Lady Rose?"

"Let's see."

The conversation started flowing.

The two of them are masters at their craft in production. Although they may still be awkward in ordinary conversations, if it's specially about producing goods, it seems like they would have an inexhaustible topic.

Speaking about Ayame who created this opportunity, she listened to the conversation of the two who sprouted small smiles as she curled up into a ball on Kato-san's knees and started sleeping with a 'kuu kuu' sound.
Although she did everything at her own pace, it was certainly due to Ayame that the atmosphere had calmed down.

The weakest companion out of us is undoubtedly her.
Her mobility is at the level of a puppy, whose fur just started growing out, back in the world we lived in. She also has a monster-like endurance but although she may be possible of spitting out fireballs—a specialty of Balloon Foxes—she wouldn't be able to survive a battle on her own.

However, Ayame's existence gave us a certain sort of comfort. With such a rare disposition, she has become another indispensible existence to me.

"Wouldn't it be great if such days were to continue forever?"

I nodded while feeling a flood of emotions towards Lily's words, whom was snuggling by my side.

"Aah. That's right. I really wish so…"

I somehow had a hunch that it was an impossible wish.

By leaving this forest, I would probably be in an environment that is a sudden change from the one I left behind.
If I take a step into the human world, I would be forced to face my fellow race, humans, whether I like it or not.
I am a Master who leads a Family of Monsters like Lily. No matter what happens, we will help each other out and live on—I resolved thus in my heart. <checked>

Leading monsters is my special trait but I still don't know how the humans of this world would react to it at this point of time.

We would eventually chance upon the people of my race in actuality… I don't know what kind of connection we may have with strangers that were students.

I have absolutely no need to accept them but I wished that they would at least not have any antagonism.

Nevertheless, if they became hostile… At that time, I would also resolve myself and fight against my fellow race, the humans. In order to protect this sight that is in front of me.

* * *

It was several days after that that I set out from the Arachne's nest.
We are headed towards the north——We stepped forward to the edge of the forest and the human world that stretches beyond it.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

◆ This is the first post that was promised.

◆ The name of the parasitic vine is Asarina, the name of the Balloon Fox became Ayame. A Balloon Fox is something like a fox linked to fate, I was wavering between 'Red Spider Lily' (Cluster amaryllis) or 'Fox Face', but there wasn't anything that would exactly fit the image of that type of cuteness.

◆ The next update will be on 21/3 (Friday).

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